THE *Metropolitane Feast*, OR THE BIRTH-DAY of our *Saviour* Jesus Christ,

Annually to be kept holy, by them that call upon him in all these KINGDOMES.

Proved by Scriptures, the practice of the Church Primitive and Reformed; the Testimonies of the Fathers and Modern Divines; strong Reasons grounded on the Word of God confirming Miracles, &c.

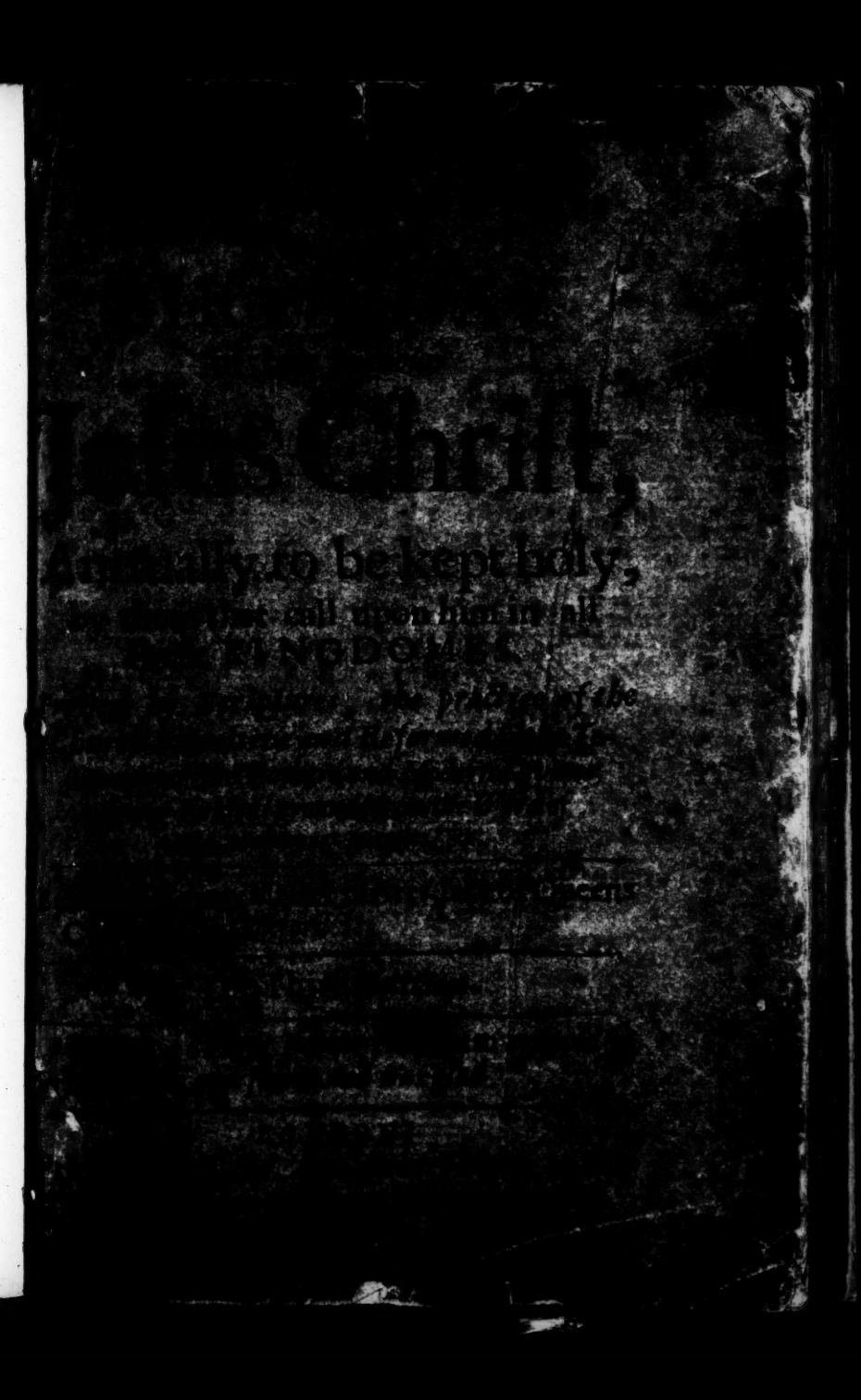
By *Allan Blayney* Master in Arts, late of Queens Colledge in *Oxford*.

The Third *Edition*.

John 8.56. *Your Father* Abraham *rejoyced to see my Day, and saw it and was glad.*

LONDON,
Printed by *T. M.* for *Robert Horn* at the *Turks*-head neer the Royal *Exchange*, 1662.

1485 a 16



To the Worſhipfull,

much Honoured and munificent Gentleman, JOHN DUTTON *of* SHIERBOURN *in the County of* Glouceſter *Eſquire.*

Sir,

THIS *Piece* had its *Conception* under your Roof, and its *Birth* from your bounty; She was the onely *Midwife* to bring it out into the worlds view: gave it its *firſt Birth* from the Preſſe, and hath now renewed it by a *Second*, which now by your *nerves* having ſtrength to go, comes to kiſſe your hands, and to acknowledge its ſelf (as I do likewiſe) *next under God your Creature*; for when all was gone, and nothing left: I fallen and ready to periſh, your

goodnesse relieved me: your hand took me up, and from worse than nothing, brought me to what *I am*.

Pastor fido. *The former* Edition came out under an unknown name, was then fearfull, the *Subject* being not commonly handled, and yet commonly spoke against, but *your well known name* adding a lustre to the Piece, and your *great worth, together with your love of Learning and Antiquity*, procuring it acceptance where ever it came, makes *the second*, even dare to wear the name of *the obscure and worthlesse Author*: The former *Dedication* was in verse, *this* in prose, *both* to *you*, to show, that in *both* the Authour's *Yours*: *the Piece* might have been worthy of a great *mans* acceptance, if the *workman* had been skilfull; but whatsoever it is, accept it (*noble* Sir) as the *Votoria Tabula* of my love and thanks dedicated to the *Temple of your Honour*: It was your pleasure to honour *it* with your *Patronage*, and *it* will honour you to your profit. It will not be a *Pillar* onely to keep your name in memory; but a Jewell to your Crown of Glory, in that you willingly became *the worthy Patron*

to

to the *first Tract* that ever was purposely, and solely written in defence of the honour due to *the much despised day of Christs Nativity*, that day above all dayes, *that the Lord made his own*, by *being* born thereupon; *the marriage day* of heaven and earth, God and man, *when the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Christ* the *Bridegroom*, our nature the *Bride*, and *you* by patronizing the *Day*, the *Bridegrooms friend*; a *Title* more honourable than *Earth* can give, *An honour* more profitable than all the *Gold Earths dark Exchequer* doth incloſe, while that in the end of the dayes, he ſhall ſeat *you* that have thus honoured *his Day* near himſelf in his glory for the day of Eternity, with that Honourable Call, *Friend, come up hither*; and give you a chief place among the Saints, at his own right hand, with an, *He that honureth me, him will I honour.*

My Prayers Sir, (which are all my *Riches*) ſhall be daily offered up for the performance; as alſo for the proſperity of *you*, and *your lovely and loving Spouſe*, that as you are *Una Caro in terra*, One Fleſh on earth; ſo you may be

Unum Sydus in Cœlo, One Conſtellation in Heaven, ſhining as the brightneſſe of the Firmament, for ever and ever. You have been *faithfull yoke-fellows*, in drawing help and relief to *poore Paſtor Fido* (My prayers ever) give me leave to preſent *my ſelf* wholly *Yours* (for your ſo much owning him) in and by the name of

Your humble and devoted Servant,

Allan Blayney.

Name

Names of the Fathers, Historians, Modern Divines, and other Writers, that illustrate the truth in the following Treatise, and the time wherein they flourished.

	Anno Dom.		Anno Dom.
1. *Clemens Romanus*	70.	21. *Chrysostome*	398.
2. *Ignatius*	71.	22. *Augustine*	420.
3. *Justine Martyr*	150.	23. *Orosius*	425.
4. *Irenæus*	180.	24. *Cyrillus Alex.*	430.
5. *Tertullian*	203.	25. *Theodoret*	431.
6. *Clemens Alex.*	204.	26. *Cassianus.*	440.
7. *Origen*	226.	27. *Leo magnus*	444.
8. *Cyprian*	240.	28. *Prosper*	445.
9. *Arnobius*	285.	29. *Vigilius*	495.
10. *Lactantius.*	290.	30. *Fulgentius*	500.
11. *Athanasius*	326.	31. *Rupertus*	580.
12. *Hillarius*	355.	32. *Isiodorus His.*	596.
13. *Optatus*	365.	33. *Bede*	700.
14. *Basil the great*	370.	34. *Jo. Damascen*	731.
15. *Greg. Nazian.*	371.	35. *Rabanus Maurus*	830
16. *Epiphanius*	337.	36. *Haymo*	850.
17. *Ambrosius*	374.	37. *Theophylact.*	880.
18. *Gregory Nyssen*	380	38. *Oecumenius*	1070.
19. *Hieronimus*	385	39. *Bernardus patrum ultimus*	1120.
20. *Prudentius*	390.		

Anno Dom.			
Dionysius Exiguus	532.	*Petrus de natalibus*	
Nicephorus	1305.	*Johannes Lucidus*	
Marcus Antonius	1500.	*Aſtedius*	
		Bonaventure	

Confeſſiones Eccleſiarum Reformatarum.

Anno Dom.		Anno Dom.	
Auguſtana	1530.	*Suevica*	1530.
Baſilienſis	1531.	*Wittenbergenſis*	1552.
Saxonica	1551.	*Helvetica Poſterior*	1566
Gallica.	1559.	*Belgica*	1566.
Helvetica prior	1536.	*Bohemica.*	1573.

Eccleſiæ Nationales.

Poloniæ, Subaudiæ, Hungariæ, Angliæ, Scotiæ Lituaniæ, Ruſſiæ, Samogitiæ, in praxi ſua.

Conſenſus Proteſtantium	1541.
Synodus Sendmorenſis	1570.

Modern Divines.

Calvin, Bullenger, Melanchton, Feſtus Hommius, Hemingius, Zanchius, cum multis aliis, *&c.*

Old Fathers thirty nine, loe Chriſtmas keep with me,
And hundred thouſands more of brave yong gallantry.
Moſt zealous Sparks they are, they'l keep it every year
For Chriſt, and for his day, they'l ſpend their blood ſo dear. *(ſhall ſpeak,*
Let's hear what they can ſay they for themſelves
Their words they will make way? while others are to ſeek.

The

THESIS.

The Birth-day of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the 25. of December *ought yearly to be kept holy by all Christians.*

PETER the Apostles chiefe, and Christ's companion, did Prophecy, that in the latter dayes there should come *false Cheaters*; the word I confesse in our Translation is *Teachers*, but we may read either, for they are both one; the one word doth anagramatize the other, and both words and deeds do prove them to be the same in these dayes, when *Cheaters* turn *Teachers*, and *Teachers Cheaters*; cheating Christ of his glory, *denying the Lord that bought them*, themselves of salvation, *bringing upon themselves swift destruction*: the way of truth, of its reputation, *making it to be evill spoken of*, Christ of his followers

2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

Anagr.

Teachers. Cheaters.

lowers, *they following them*, and men of
Verſe 3. their moneyes, *with feigned words, making merchandiſe of them.*

Theſe daies are now upon us, and now theſe men, *Theſe unclean ſpirits like unto Frogs, Revel.* 16. 13. doe not onely *creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women*, as *Paul* foretold, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. but even to *their bed-chambers and beds*, as thoſe
Exod. 8. 3. that plagued *Ægypt*; and not onely there, but openly and abroad, like ſo many tinking *Copperſmiths*, cry down Chriſt Jeſus to magnifie the *Diana* of their own inventions; upon the Pikes of whoſe opinions,
Acts 19. 34 Chriſt and his truth are toſſed daily in ſuch a ſevere manner, that it is now grown diſputable, whether Chriſt ſuffered more in *his body* by the fury and violence of the hand, or in his *Divinity, and Divine ordinances*, by the ſcourge and ſting of venomous and depraving tongues, denying not onely *the Lord that bought them*, but all that any way belongs to him, leaving him more naked than he was between the two Thieves upon the Croſſe, who ſtole nothing from him. One would have him

no

no God; another *no man*; this again, would have him a *meer man*, and that denies him a *true body*; one ſtrips him quite of *fleſh*, another cloaths him with it, but makes it ſinfull; this would have him an *Angel*, that little better than a *Devil*, or at leaſt that he uſed one. One forſakes the *Aſſembly of Saints*, another his *Sacraments*: one denyes his *Prayer* to be ſaid, another his *Birth-day* to be kept, as if his coming to ſave ſinners were not worth the thankſgiving. Thus when men meddle too much with Chriſt, he gives them over to themſelves, and will have nothing to do with them, and then every head is frantick with a ſtrange opinion, and that with ſome wild fancy, which all meet in the ſame improbability, and foot-following falſhood.

My task muſt be to confute them that do deny that the twenty fifth day of *December*, the day whereon our Saviour Chriſt came into the world, is to be kept holy. In traverſing of which, give me leave to make uſe of that Apology unto all (in this caſe) which *Ambroſe* did once to *Gratian* the Emperour, in the caſe

caſe of Chriſts *Divinity*, *Nolo argumento credas (ſancte imperator) & noſtræ diſputationi, Scripturas interrogemus, Apoſtolos, Prophetas, Chriſtum. Lean not ſo much to my ſtrength of Argument and diſputation, as to ſacred authority and proof: Let us ask the Scriptures, Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Apoſtles, Chriſt*; let me adde, (for ſo both my task and induſtry require) *Churches, Fathers*, &c. Let us ask of the *former dayes*, and them that are more aged than we, the ſacred Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtories. Let us give Antiquity her due, and not paddle in a new raiſed puddle at our own doores, while we may have our fill at a *pure and clear fountain*, whereof while we drink therein, we may ſee the truth cleared which we maintain.

To

To begin then with the Scripture, Gods own word, to prove the honour of his Day, who in the beginning was the word.

IN the first of the *Hebrews*, at the sixth verse, when the Lord brings in the first begotten into the world, he saith, *Let all the angels of God worship him*; in the words, commanding those glorious creatures to set the day of *Christs birth* aside, for such an holy *worship*. *Scripture.* Heb. 1. 6.

And so they did, for so we read, *Luke* 2. 7, 8, 9, 10. *&c.* no sooner had *Mary* brought forth her *first-born son.* and laid him in a Manger, but immediately the *Angels*, according to the former command, descend from heaven in multitudes, to make merry, and keep holyday with the wakefull *Shepherds*, in the fields of *Ephrata*; *Heaven and Earth, Church Militant and triumphant, angels and men* thus meet in one, to solemnize this glorious day; to make it so, and to consecrate it for a future worship, *the glory of the Lord shone round about them*; The *Angel* preacheth the Sermon, and his *Text* is suitable to the time and Auditory, directed to them that were to teach others; the words, *Fear not you; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, which*

which ſhall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the City of David, *a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord,* The Sermon
Verſe 14. ended, the multitude of the heavenly hoſt to ſing the *Pſalme*, the burthen whereof was. *Glory be to God on high, in earth peace, and good will towards men.* This done, the *Angels* depart, and leave their brethren the *Shepherds* to finiſh what they began; for this purpoſe they, as they were commanded by the *Angels*, go
Verſe 16. in haſt to *Bethlehem*, and worſhip the new born *Babe*, which ſervice once performed, they return not to their flocks, but leave them to the protection of the *new born Shepherd*, and go up and down all *that day*, preaching what they had heard and ſeen, and make them to wonder, and well they might, ſeeing great was this *Myſtery of godlineſſe, God mani-*
1 Tim. 3. 16 *feſted in the fleſh, ſeen of Angels, by them preached unto the Shepherds*, believed on by the *Jews*, and all upon this day.

Shall *Angels* then, that have no ſin, preach and exhort their hearers to a celebration, and ſhall *men be* ſilent that are nothing but ſin? Shall *Shepherds* leave their flocks, and *Chriſtians* go to plough; Here we have *Gloriam Dei, diem illuminantem*,

em, Angelum prædicantem, multitudinem canentē, Pastores feriantes, the glory of God, the day enlightening, one Angel preaching, the multitude singing, the Shepherds keeping holy-day, what better warrant for the sanctifying of this day? Shall the day then of *Christs Resurrection* be kept holy once a week, his birth-day from the Grave, and shal not the *day of his Nativity*, or of his birth from the womb be solemnized once a year? especially seeing we have more warrant for keeping of this than that, for that we have onely the practise of a few Churches, as of *Troas*, *Galatia* and *Corinth*, who used to meet together upon the first day of the week, but not one word of precept; but for keeping the day of *Christs Nativity*, we have both precept *of God and Angels in the Church triumphant, the practise of the Shepherds and Christians in all ages in the Church militant.*

A third place to prove this truth, we have in the hundred and tenth *Psalm*, verse the third, where the *Prophet* speaking of the coming and Kingdome of Christ, saith, *In the day of thy power, the people shall bring thee free-will offerings with an holy worship, the dew of thy birth, is as* Psal. 110. 3.

the

the womb of the morning: Or as our last Translation reads it, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holinesse, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth.* Here the *Prophet* makes mention of a day, in which all people should bring free-will offerings unto *Christ*, with an holy worship, which is to be tendred unto him in the beauties of holinesse, that is, in the particular places of Assembly, *the Churches*, and therefore to be kept *holy-day*, nay must, for it runs, *the people shall bring thee free will offerings*, or they shall be willing in *that day*, shewing it to be their duty, when ever the day comes so to do.

Now what day is this, but *Christs Birth-day?* and therefore we have it here called the *dew of his birth Tat jaiduthekah*, most properly according to the originall, which was either *as the womb of the morning*, as one translation, *or from the womb of the morning*, as the other, the first shewing that the *Birth of Christ*, and *dew* or *fruit* thereof, was like the *mornings womb*, comfortable and pleasant unto all, according to the Angels testimony, *Luke* 2.10. Or that he was born in the begin-

ning

ning of the morning at cock-crowing, before perfect day, as appears in the same place.

Further, that the *day* here meant was the day of *Christs Birth*, appears especially in this, that it is called the *day of his power*, in the morning whereof, his power was manifested in breaking open the gates of *MARIES* Wombe; nay more properly the *DAY of his Power*, because *Initium regni*, the beginning of his reign, being as this day born King of the *Jews*, Mat. 2. 2. When Kings came to do homage to this King of Kings that now was born, and whereupon he set his *King upon his holy hill of Zion*, and therefore the day of his power, *Psal. 2. 6.* when he said, *Thou art my Sonne, this day have I begotten thee, vers. 7.* That is to say, I have manifested thee by being born as upon this day, to be my *first begotten from all eternity, giving thee the Heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*, that thou mayest break them *with a rod of iron, and bruise them to pieces like a potters vessel*: all arguments of great power, *vers. 8, 9.* concordant with the words of the 110 *Psalm, v. 5, 6, 7.* Behold the day of *Christs power*, upon that day, Psal. 110. 1. compared with Ps. 2. 6

therefore *every year* that the *Prophecy* may be fulfilled, the people that believe in him, are to bring him, not legall Sacrifices, which figured him to come; but the *free-will offerings of praise, and thankesgiving* for his gracious comming, to be tendred unto God in the *beauty of holinesse, the places where we meet together to exercise holy duties*, and the reason is, because the dew of his *birth*, like the *wombe of the morning*, did refresh all; so for that, refreshing thanks is to be given by all.

A fourth and last place, is, *John* 8. 56. where our Saviour Christ saith unto the
John 8. 56. *Pharises, Your father Abraham rejoyced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad:* What day was this? It was not the day of his *Passion*, nor of his *Resurrection*, nor of his *Ascension* into heaven, for these were to come when our *Saviour* spake the words, but that day was past of which he then spake; it could then be no other but the *day of his comming and manifestation in the flesh* (according to the current of *Interpreters*) that blessed *day* of his *Nativity*, which *Abraham* by the eye of faith beheld, and saw so many years before.

Now, if he, the Father of the faithfull did

did ſo many years before, rejoyce and was glad to ſee *that day* a comming; ſurely all the *Sons* of the faithfull *Abraham* will in their ſucceſſive generations be glad, rejoyce, and give thanks that it is come and paſt, and every y ar ſolemnize the ſame in remembrance of what they got by his comming, 1 *Tim.* 1.15.1. Almoſt 2000.

This is that *great Feſtivall* called by the Eaſtern Church Θεοφάνια. or Θεοφανία, *God appearing*, ὅτι ἐφανη θεὸς ἀνθρώποις διὰ γενέσιως becauſe God appeared to men by his Birth; ſo *Baſil* [a] and *Nazianzen* [b] or to uſe the Apoſtles phraſe, *God was manifeſt in the fleſh.* [c]

[a] *De humana Chriſti gen.*
[b] *Orat.* 38.
[c] 1 Tim. 3. 16

2. Ἐπιφανία the *Epiphanie* or *the appearing* Κατ' ἐξοχὴν implying, that this appearing excelled all other whatſoever. But here two things are worthy to be noted. The one is, that the *Churches in Ægypt*, becauſe they celebrated *Chriſts birth* and alſo his *Baptiſme*, upon one and the ſame day, called both theſe Feaſts promiſcuouſly *Epiphanie* [d]. The other is, that the modern Churches have through uſe and cuſtome of ſpeech, reſtrained the word *Epiphanie* unto the *Feaſt* commonly called the *Twelfth day*, celebrated in me-

[d] *Nazian. Orat. in S. lum. Chryſoſt. ho. de Epiph do. Magdeb. cent. 4. c. 6.*

mory of the miraculous appearance of the *Star* which led the wise men to [e]Christ.

[e] Mat. 2. 7.

[f] *Nazian orat.* 38.

3. Γενεθλία τῦ σωτῆρος. [f] The Birth-day of our Saviour.

[g] *Chrys. orat. de philog.*

4. Ἡ ἑορτὴ μέγιστη, καὶ τῶν ἑορτῶν μητρόπολις. [g] *The greatest and Metropolitan Feast.*

[h] *Ambro. serm.* 12, 13.

The Western Church called it *Dies Nativitatis*, the day of the Nativity. [h] By way of eminency and dignity.

[i] John 1. 5. 9

2. *Luminaria*, [i] *The Feast of lights*, either because they used many lights and candles at this Feast; or rather because Christ the light of lights, that true light then came into the world.

[k] *Hieron. tom.* 9. 82.

3. *Dies Natalis Domini vel Natalitia Domini.* [k] The Birth day of our Lord; we call it *Christmas*, or *Christs Messe*, not from any Masse said thereupon, but from our ancient word *Messe*, which signifies a *Feast*, so that *Christmas* is no more than a *messe* or *Feast* provided on the day of *Christs birth*, in a way of rejoycing as *Abraham* did, foretold by *Jacob* [l] *Gen.* 49. 10. Marked out by the Prophet *Isaiah*, as a speciall and wonderfull *day*; [m] nay, so ravished he is with the consideration thereof, that he rejoyceth with the Church,

[l] Gen. 49.

[m] Isa. 7. 14.

Church, as if the *day of Christs birth* were then come. [n] *They joy before thee according to the joy in harveſt, and as men rejoyce when they divide the ſpoil: For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given.* And he is ſeconded by the Prophet *Zechariah* [o] ſaying, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will bring forth my ſeruant* (CHRIST) *the Branch. In that day ſhall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.*

[n] Iſa. 9. 6.

[o] Zech. 3. 8. 10.

So much *de jure*, that the day may and ought to be kept holy of all them that have any part in Chriſt, and that by *Scripture.*

Now we come to prove that *de facto, that it hath been kept holy in all ages, in all parts of the Chriſtian world, and our witneſſe ſhall be the practiſe of Gods Church, both Eaſt and Weſt, in* Aſia, Africa *and* Europe, *in the Primitive times, and of all the reformed Churches in Chriſtendome,* (Scotland *onely excepted,* and yet *not altogether*) *in theſe times whererein we live.* Which practiſe is ſufficient to prove the point, thogh there were only general grounds out of *Scripture* to ſupport and back it; the *Church* having power for any pub-

lick benefit, to appoint a *day of thanksgiving* yearly to be kept holy in remembrance of the ſame, and by the generall practiſe thereof, *all the children of the Church*, being bound to keep the ſame, in their ſucceeding generations.

Such was the feaſt of *Purim* inſtituted by the Church of the *Jews*, and commanded yearly to be obſerved by all their poſterity in remembrance of their deliverance from *Haman*'s cruelty.

Eſther 9.20 21.22.

Such was *the Feaſt of the dedication of the Temple*, at which *Chriſt was annually preſent*, yet neither of theſe were commanded by God.

John 10.22 1 Macc.4. 59.

Such is our *Lords day*, commonly ſo called, or the *firſt day of the week*, by us kept holy in remembrance of Chriſts reſurrection (*or his birth, or both*) thereupon, for the keeping whereof we have no expreſſe command out of the word of God: but onely the bare practiſe of ſome few Churches, in the *Apoſtles time*, and *the conſtant obſervance of all particular Churches over all the world, ever ſince their time*, which with us is ſo prevailing an authority, and ſure warrant for obſervation, that we ſhould account him

him that ſhould ſpeak againſt the keeping of the *Lords day holy*, an *Anathema, Maranatha.*

Such then alſo, is the *day of our Lords Nativity*, which hath alwayes *generally, univerſally, conſtantly, annually been kept holy in all Nations from the Apoſtles time to ours.* For which we now come to produce our *Witneſſes*; and firſt for the *Primitive times*, thoſe purer dayes of Chriſtianity.

The ſum of whoſe evidence is, that our *Saviour Chriſt* was born in *Winter*, near unto or upon the very day of the *Winter Solſtice*, or (*as all agree*) he was then born when the dayes began to encreaſe and lengthen, upon the 25 *day of December* ſay ſome, upon the *eighth of the Calends of* January ſay others, and yet all ſay one and the ſame thing, for the *eighth of the Calends of* Januar. & the 25. of *December*, according to diverſe accounts are all one, and the *winter Solſtice* in our *Saviours* time was upon the 25 of *December*, as alſo the *Vernall Equinox* upon the 25 of *March*, as all Aſtronomers confeſſe, and ſhall more plainly appear in the following Treatiſe, and ſo are all the *Fa-*

thers to be underſtood, that ſay with Saint *Auguſtine*, that *Chriſt* was *Conceptus in æquinoctio verno: natus in Solſtitio hyberno, Conceived in the vernal æquinox, and born in the winter Solſtice*, that he was born on the eighth of the *Calends* of *January*, that is to ſay, on the 25 day of *December*, as we in *England* have affirmed.

They ſay and affirm that this day was in the *Primitive times* kept holy by *Apoſtolicall Tradition* grounded upon the word of God; and ſuch *Traditions* we are bound to obſerve, even by the word of God, as if they had been written by the Apoſtles themſelves as we may be aſſured by thoſe two Texts 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 15. 1 *Cor.* 11. 2. S. *Paul in the former bidding them hold the Traditions which they had been taught either by word, or his Epiſtle, and in the other prayſing the Corinthians, that they remembred him in all things, and kept τὰς παραδόσεις, the ordinances as he delivered them unto them.* And ſuch an *Apoſtolicall ordinance*, or Tradition, is the ſolemnizing of the *Birth day* of our *Saviour Chriſt Jeſus.*

To prove the laſt firſt; *let two or three*

Witneſſes

Witneſſes ſpeak to this particular, and you ſhall have the reſt open their mouths in the maintenance of the other, in the times wherein they lived.

Firſt then, Saint *Auguſtine* in his 118 Epiſtle to *Januarius*, ſpeaking of the yearly Feaſts then obſerved, ſaith, *Illa quæ non ſcripta, ſed tradita cuſtodimus, quæ quidem toto terrarum orbe obſervantur, dantur intelligi, vel ab ipſis Apoſtolis, vel plenariis conciliis, quorum eſt in eccleſia ſaluberima authoritas, commendata atque ſtatuta retineri; ſicuti quod Domini paſſio, & reſurrectio, & aſcenſio in cœlum, & adventus de cœlo Spiritus ſancti, anniverſaria ſolemnitate celebrantur.* Thoſe *Feaſts* concerning which we have no expreſſe *Scripture*, but onely *Traditions*, which are now obſerved all the world over; we ought to know that the keeping of *them* was commended unto us, and inſtituted (or commanded) *either by the Apoſtles themſelves, or Generall Councels*, of which there is a moſt wholeſome uſe in the Church of God; ſuch are the *Feaſts* of our *Lords Paſſion, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion into Heaven, and the coming down of the Holy Ghoſt*, which are now kept holy, with a yearly ſolemnity.

But

But here the *prophane opponent* may reply, *where* is the *Feast of the Nativity all this while?* I answer, he makes a more speciall and honourable mention of it in the very next Epistle (*as not to be named the same day with the former for the surpassing excellency thereof*) saying, *Hic primum oportet, ut Die Nativitatis Domini, Sacramenta celebremus, & ipsum revolutum anni Diem festa devotione celebrare.* Here it chiefly behoves us (*more than in the forementioned Feasts*) that upon the day of *our Lords Nativity*, we should receive the *Sacrament* in remembrance of him that was born upon it, and upon the retnrn of the year, to celebrate the very *day* with a *Feasting devotion.*

Ep. 119.

Oportet, It is needfull, it is our duty.

Christmas day a Sacrament day.

These words were written more than 1200. years agoe, when the *forementioned dayes*, and especially that *of the Nativity*, were kept festivall and holy, *Ubicunque se diffundit terrarum universitas, universa quacunque se diffundit ecclesia*, even to the worlds end, whereso ever the Church did extend her self, as he doth maintain, *Libro 32. contra Faustum cap. 12.*

Floruit An. 420.

Floruit An. 370.

To leave him for a while, *Epiphanius*,

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a Father more ancient than he by one hundred and fifty years, in his *Compendium* doth affirm, that the *Christians of the Primitive Church*, did fast upon all the *Frydayes* in the year, *except the day of Christs Nativity* fell upon a *Fryday*, which the *Church* (saith he) excepted by an Apostolicall tradition, not fasting but feasting thereupon.

We must not here omit, that ever since the time of Christ, according to the vulgar account, *our Saviour* hath been held to be born on the 25 day of *December*, in the year of the world, 3949. which account hath been received over all *Christendome*, for so much as belongs to *that Day*; It is called the *Vulgar* and *Dionysian* account, because *Dionysius Exiguus*, Abbot of *Rome*, in the time of *Justinian the* Emperour, about the year 532. got it established for the onely true and orthodox account, because it was the sole account used by the *Christians* that lived before, but especially, by *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, and *Prosper* of *Aquitane*, who use none but in their Ecclesiastical Historics of the Primitive times.

Dionysius Exiguus, *Anno* 532. *Floruit.*

To adde more light hereunto, there is

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a manuſcript in the Archives of the publick *Library* at *Oxford* in the Arabick tongue, being a Codex of the Councels collected by *Joſeph* the Egyptian, wherein it is affirmed, that both the Feaſt, and alſo the day thereof, *December* the 25. is ſaid to ſtand by Apoſtolicall Canon, the words make it the Act of a Councell, ſaying, *Ye are to conſtitute an Anniverſary Feaſt, at the Nativity of the Lord Chriſt, on the day on which he was born, that is, on the* 25 *day of the firſt Canon* i. e. *of* December; *for this is the principall of all the Feaſts.*

There is another Arabick Manuſcript in the Archives of the publick Librarie in *Cambridge*, compoſed by *Sabid Aben Batrick*, who in the life of *Conſtantine*, hath theſe words to the ſame purpoſe; *Our Lord and redeemer Jeſus Chriſt was born, on the* 15 *day of the firſt Canon, that is, of* December, *and on the ſixth day of the ſecond Canon, that is, of* January, *was the Epiphany or Baptiſme of Chriſt.* The Egyptian Calendar, in *Kirker de computatione Eccleſiaſtica cap.* 3. and *Johannes Antiochenus* or *Malata*, do in plain terms affirm the ſame. Theſe teſtimonies I have tendered as they were

were transcribed and Englished by painful Mr. *Gregory*, and communicated to me by that learned, worthy and judicious Divine, Doctor *Hammon*. As also that *Saint Chrysostome, in his Homily on Christs* Birth day, preached to the people of *Antioch*, doth affirm and professe, that he had it out of the *Censuall Rolls* or *Tables of Augustus the Emperour*, that is to say, those Registers of all that were enrolled by *Augustus* his Decree, *Luke* 2.1. together with the place and day of the Moneth, and year wherein it was done, that our Saviour Christ was born on the 25. of *December*, παρὰ τῶν ἀκριβῶς ταῦτα εἰδότων, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην οἰκούντων παραλήφαμεν, we have received the day from those that accurately knew these things, and who dwelt in the City of *Rome*.

That *enrolment or* ἀπογραφὴ or *Census* was clearly the occasion of *Josephs* and *Maries* coming to *Bethlehem*, & when they were upon that occasion, *Christ* was born, and must therefore have his name and birth enrolled also, as Saint *Chrysostome* found it in them. And to these Tables also *Justine Martyr*, in his *Second Apologie*,

gie, makes his Appeal to evidence the place of Christs birth, even to those *Emperours of* Rome, who would easily have been able to have disapproved him, if it had not been so. And further to witnesse the truth of their testimony, the same Father, writing against *Marcion, lib.*14.*cap.*19. saith, *Censum Augusti fidelissimum testem Dominicæ Nativitatis, Romanæ Archivæ custodiunt,* The Romane Archives preserve *Augustus Censuall Roll*, a most faithful *witnes* of the *Birth* of *Christ.*

Clemens Romanus Anno 70. Phil.43.

But to put it beyond all doubt, *Clemens the Scholar of the Apostles*, mentioned by Saint *Paul*, and called *Clement* of *Rome*, to distinguish him from the other of *Alexandria*, who flourished in the seventieth year of *Christ*, when all the *Apostles* (*James* excepted) were alive, who was *Register* unto them, and writ the Book of the Apostles Constitutions, in the thirteenth Chapter of the said Books sets this down for one.

The Apostolicall Decree for the Day of Christs Birth.

Dies natalis Domini nostri Jesu Christi celebretur, vicesimo quinto die mensis noni (i.e. Decembris) *numerando à Martio.*

Let

Let the *Birth day* of our Saviour *Jesus Christ* be celebrated on the *twenty fifth day of the ninth moneth*, (that is to say, of *December*) beginning to reckon from *March*.

And again,

Dies Festos agitate fratres, ac primum quidem diem Natalis.

Brethren, keep diligently the *Feast dayes*, and truly in the first place *the day of Christs birth*.

Behold the *Constitution* it self, word for word, and his *exhortation* annexed; by which and what hath been already said, and what shall be said hereafter, it doth and shall appear, that *the twenty fifth day of December*, hath even from the *Apostles* time, been kept holy by all *Christians*, solemnly meeting together in their severall Congregations, for the birth day of our Saviour Christ, thereupon joyning together in publick prayers, hearing the word, receiving the Sacraments, and giving thanks for his coming into the world; all building upon *this Constitution*, grounded upon the forecited Const. *lib. 5. cap. 13.*

forecited places of the Word of God.

Suppose it is true, which is not, that *Justine Martyr*, *Irenbus* and *Tertullian*, those *first Fathers*, who flourished in the age next to the *Apostles*, make no mention of keeping of this day, have not a line in all their writings now extant, to exhort the people to observe the same, shall we therefore conclude that the day was not therefore *annually solemnized*? No in no wise (for those *purer Christians* did do it without all doubt, though many times privately, for fear of persecution) but their silence concludes rather, that the *Christians* then needed no exhortations to so holy a duty, nor no informations concerning the *day and year of our Saviours birth*, they having in perfect memory what the *Apostles* had delivered concerning this particular.

Justine An. 150.

Irenæus. 180.

Tertullian] An. 203.

But when afterwards the *Mystery of iniquity* began to worke, and divers *Christians* in those times of persecution and seducement, forgot their duty, and divers *hereticks*, the filthy spawne of *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, began to deny the *Godhead* of our Saviour, as *Montanus*, *Theodotion*,

dotion. *Proclus*, *Alcibiades*, *Themiſton*, *Patroclus*, *Artemon*, *Alexander*, who with many more crept into the *Church*, about the year 200. denying not onely his *Deity*, affirming him *a meer man*, conceived of mans ſeed, but denying alſoe his *Birth-day* to be kept holy, and dehorting their *Proſelytes* from worſhipping thereupon, leaſt they ſhould ſeeme to honour and alſoe acknowledge him for *God*. Hereupon the *Fathers*, *thoſe Primitive lights*, to vindicate our Saviours *Deity*, and to ſhew that *Divine worſhip* was due to him, began vehemently to urge the keeping of the *day*, urging the *tradition* and aforementioned *conſtitution* of the *Apoſtles*, the *examples of their foreſathers*, and *the Churches univerſall practiſe*, in the times that they lived in, bringing in the cuſtome *of the Churches* of God, as a maine argument, as the *Apoſtle* likewiſe doth, in a ſmaller matter, 1 *Cor.* 11. 16. It is true what *Tertullian* ſaith, that *Chriſt was called truth not cuſtome*, and that *cuſtome* without *truth* is nothing worth but know that the *cuſtome of the Church*, grounded upon *truth*, is like an armed man to fight for and maintain it.

To proceed then to the following *Fathers*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who flourished at the same time with *Tertullian*, in the yeare 204. reputes and censures the followers of *Basilides* for Hereticks, who held that our *Saviour Christ* was borne on the twenty fourth, or twenty fifth of *Pharmuth* or *April*, and others that said that he was borne on the twenty fifth of *Pachon* or *May*, contrary to the ancient and received *Tradition*, *Libr.* 10. *Stromatum*. Differences about it argue the observation.

Clemens Alexand. anno 234.

Next after him *Telesphorus* in his decretal Epistle saith, *Statutum est*, &c, *It is ordained, that in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they doe celebrate the publick Church-services, and in them solemnly sing the Angels Hymne, because also the same night he was declared unto the Shepheards by an Angel*, as the truth it self doth witnesse.'

Telesphorus Ep. dec. to. 1 Cor. pag. 117.

Next after him *Theophilus Bp. of Cæsarea in Palestine*, a man approved by M. *Perkins* in his demonstration of the problem, *Vol.* 2. *p.* 597. affirms, that we ought to celebrate the *Birth-day* of our Lord, on what day soever the 25. of *Decem.* shall happen.

Theophilus

He

He is cited by *Magdeburgenſis Cent.* 2. c. 6. and by *Hoſpinian de orig. Feſtorum Chriſtianorum.*

Origen Scholar to *Clemens* of *Alexandria* famous about the year 226. in divers parts of his works records the annuall and univerſal obſervation of the ſame. *Origen* 262

After him *Cyprian* (who lived in the ſame age with *Arnobius* and *Lactantius*) and flouriſhed in the yeare 240. Biſhop of *Carthage*, and a glorious *Martyr*, hath one whole Sermon, now extant in his Workes, preached upon the very day of Chriſt's birth, part whereof we ſhal here ingroſſe, which will give excellent light to the truth of this particular. *Cypian* 243

His words follow.

'Adeſt Chriſti multum deſiderata & 'diu expectata Nativitas. Adeſt ſolemni- 'tas inclita, & impræſentiarum Salvatori 'grates & laudes viſitatori ſuo per orbem 'terrarum ſancta reddit Eccleſia. Gaudia 'nobis cælitus nunciantur, lætitia impe- 'ratur, nox iſta ſacri partus cõſcia, nobis 'fulgoribus illuſtratur: gloriantur in cœ- 'leſtibus ſuperi, pax in terra, bona vo- 'tas hominibus confirmatur. Adſunt An- 'geli, loquuntur Paſtoribus, non de- *Serm. de Nat. Dom.*

'dignantur loqui perſonis humilibus, '& cum ipſi ſublimes ſunt, infirmos non 'aſpernantur.

The much deſired and long look'd for *day of Chriſt's Nativity*, is now preſent with us, that *famous ſolemnity* is now upon us, and as upon this preſent *day*, the *holy Church*, throughout the whole world gives thanks to her *Saviour*, and renders praiſe to him, that as *this day viſited her from on high*. Joyes are preached from *Heaven*, and merry-making commanded on *earth*. The foregoing night conſcious of that *ſacred Birth*, is by us turned to day by bright Burning Lamps and Torches. The powers above give glory to God in the higheſt, peace is promiſed upon earth, and good will confirm'd unto men. The *Angels* are preſent, and ſpeak to the *Shepheards*, they do not now disdaine to open their mouthes to mean perſons; and though they be moſt glorious creatures, yet they deſpiſe not thoſe who are weak *&c.* So farre *he* and the *Fathers* that lived before the *Councel* of *Nice* in the firſt, ſecond, and third Century.

To

To come to the fourth, in the very beginning thereof, *Nicephorus*, in the seventh book of his *Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtory*, and the ſixth Chapter, aſſures us, that at *Nicomedia* (a City of *Bithinia*) 'when 'the Feſtivall of Chriſts Birth-day 'came, and a multitude of Chriſtians, 'of all ages, had aſſembled together in 'the Temple to celebrate that Birth-'day. *Diocleſian* the tyrant, having got-'ten an advantagious occaſion, where-'by he might accompliſh his madneſſe 'and fury, ſent men thither to incloſe 'the Temple, and ſet it on fire round a-'bout, and ſo conſumed them all to 'aſhes, even twenty thouſand perſons. Never was ſuch a bon-fire *on a Thanksgiving day*, never ſuch a Sacrifice on the *day of Chriſts Nativity*; ſo many *zealous Saints* aſcending up to heaven like *Manoah*'s *Angel* in the flame, to ſup with Chriſt above, the beginning of whoſe day they kept with the *Church* below.

But in the ſame age more honour was done unto the day by *Valentinian* Emperour of the Weſt, *Theodoſius* the great, and his Son *Arcadius*, Emperours of the Eaſt, who by their imperiall decrees au-

thoriſed the *Feaſt of the Nativity*, as *Lago Zobo* doth witneſſe, an Authour quoted by Doctor *Willet* in his *Synopſis*, 9. *gen. cont. q.* 8 *p.* 406.

Baſilius magnus 370.

If any man ſhall diſpute his credit, there is mention made of it by *Baſil the great*, that glorious lamp of *Ceſarea*, whoſe contemporaries were *Athanaſius*, *Hillary* and *Optatus*, about the year 370. when this bright Star of *Cappadocia*, inlightened the world, and witneſſed that for his time, *the bleſſed day was annually kept with ſolemn obſervance*, and he honours it with a new title, calling it *Diem* θεοφανίας as others after him, *Epiphaniam*, or τὰ ἐπιφάνια *the day of Gods appearance*, and that moſt elegantly, becauſe that upon that day, Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ *God was manifeſted in the fleſh*. Further he hath left us *one Sermon* preached thereupon now extant.

1 Tim. 3. 16. *Tom.* 1. *p.* 466.

Gregorius Nazianzenus. 372.

And *Gregory Nazianzen*, who lived and flouriſhed at the ſame time, hath an *Oration* made to the people upon that day, entituled, *Oratio in Sancta Epiphaniorum lumina*, An *Oratin* upon the hallowed light *of the Epiphanies*, (by which name ſaith the learned *Zanchy*) the

Vol. 4. *l.* 1. *c.* 19. *Theſis.*

the Fathers did not underſtand the *day* commonly ſo called, when Chriſt was worſhipped by the *wiſe men of the Eaſt*, but the day of his *Birth and Baptiſme*. Nay more, in his 38. Oration, he breaks out into this admirable expreſſion, *Virtutes cæleſtes quoque hodierno die*, &c. I am confident, that even the *heavenly powers do alſo this preſent day celebrate the Feaſt together, and leap exceedingly for joy, ſeing they are endued with the love of God and men.*

Epiphanius, that great light of *Cyprus*, who flouriſhed at the ſame time with the two forementioned Fathers, and continued under the Emperours, *Valens*, *Gratian*, *Theodoſius*, in his book entituled, *Compendiaria, varia Doctrina, de fide Catholicæ, & Apoſtolicæ eccleſiæ*, reckoning up *the annuall Feaſts then kept, and ſolemnly obſerved by the Catholick Church*, mentions *the day of Chriſts Birth* for one of the principall and chief. And further in his 51. *Hereſie* affirms, that *Chriſt* was born *circa Januarium menſem*, about the moneth of *January*; who hath left us *ſix Sermons all preached on the very day.* *Epiphanius* Ann. 373.

The next is *Ambroſe* Biſhop of *Millain* in *Italy*, who flouriſhed at the ſame time *Ambroſe.* 374.

under the Emperors, *Gratian* and *Theodosius*, about the year 374. Who doth witneſſe for the *Weſtern Churches*, that in them in his dayes, *this day was generally kept holy*; and in his ſecond Sermon preached thereupon, deſcanting upon the *Birth dayes* of Chriſt? and *John* the *Baptiſt*, his forerunner, affirms *John* to be born at *Midſummer*, and our Saviour in *the Winter*; his words are theſe.

'Ecce in Nativitate Chriſti dies creſ-
'cit, in Nativitate Johannis decreſcit,
'Chriſto oriente lux proficit, Johan-
'ne naſcente minuitur; Ipſa enim quo-
'd m modo tempora famulantur par-
'tubus ſuis. Cum detrimentum faciunt:
'Servus gignitur, cum autem Dominus
'naſcitur: augmentum conſequuntur;
, profectum plane facit Dies cum *mundi*
'*ſalvator* oritur, defectum patitur, cum
'*ultimus Propheta* generatur. Scribi-
'tur enim, *Lex & Prophetæ uſque ad Johan-*
'*nem*, atque ideo neceſſe erat ut obſcu-
'raretur legis obſervatio, ubi evocatio
'ubi Evangelii gratia, refulgebant, &
'ceſſaret *prophetia* veteris teſtamenti,
'cum novi Teſtamenti *gratia* ſucce-

debat

debat. Ergo in Nativitate Domini proficit Dies quem ſplendidiſſima lux veritatis illuminat.

Behold (ſaith he) at the *Birth of Chriſt* the day doth encreaſe, at the *birth of John* it doth decreaſe: *Chriſt* riſing the light is augmented, *John* being born it is leſſened. For the very times in a manner do wait upon their ſeveral Nativities; when they looſe, *the ſervant* is born when they gain *the Maſter* is brought forth. The day doth ſenſibly encreaſe when the Savior of the world came into it, but decreaſe, when the *laſt of the Prophets* was born in it; for it is written, that the *Law & the Prophets continued til* Johns and therefore it was needfull that the obſervation of the Law ſhould be darkned, when the calling and grace of the Goſpel began to ſhine clear: and that the Propheſie of the *Old Teſtament* ſhould ceaſe, when the grace *of the new* did ſucceed. Therefore upon the Lords birth, the day doth encreaſe, becauſe the *brighteſt light of truth* doth enlighten it.

The next is *Gregory Nyſſen*, brother to *Baſil* the great, and of the ſame time with

Gregorius Nyſſenus 380.

with Saint *Jerome*, he was present at the first *Councel* of *Constantinople*, and writ the *Creed* confirmed in that *Councel*, he flourished about the year 380. and witnesseth the very same thing with Saint *Ambrose* in his Oration made upon the day of Christs Nativivity: saying,

'In hac die minui tenebræ incipiunt, 'noctisque modi augescente radio, ad 'defectum rediguntur, Mysterium natu-'ra exponit perspicacioribus, ac docet 'quid sibi velit, quod in adventu Domi-'ni dies crescit, nox decurtatur.

Upon *this day* the darknes begins to diminish, and the *nights*, by the encreasing sun-shine grow shorter; nature her self expounds the mystery to the more prudent & teacheth us what is meant by this, that at the coming of Christ into the *world*, *the day encreaseth and the night diminisheth*. Then he addes the exposition in most elegant terms following.

Gregory Nyssen.

'Ego talia quædam dicentem mihi vi-'deor audire Creaturam; Vides no-'ctem ad summam longitudinem pro-'gressam, atque ulterius currere, ac pro-'ferri desistere, & in contrarium resolvi. 'Animadverte quod improba peccati

nox

'nox quoad fieri ad ejus poterat aucta, at-
'que extremam nequitiæ magnitudinem
'assecuta hodie ulterius progredi, ac sibi
'quasi possidendo usu capere prohibita
'est, atq; dehinc ad defectionem redigitur.
'Vides lucis radium diutius durare, &
'solem esse solito sublimiorem, animad-
'verte veræ lucis adventum, quæ radiis
'Evangelicis orbem illuminat.

Me thinks I hear the Creature speaking such like words as these unto me. Thou seest the *night* hath gain'd his utmost length, and ceaseth now to run out, or to be extended any further, but as it were to retreat. Take notice then, that now the *dishoneſt night of sin*, having encreased it self, as far as it was possible, and reached the extreme point of ungodlinesse, was this day prohibited to reach any further, and hereupon became shorter, and shorter. Thou seest the *Sun* to shine longer than it did the dayes before, and to appear higher in the *Heaven* than it was wont; take notice then of the *true light*, *that at this time sprung up among us*, and by the beams of the *Gospel* enlightens every one that comes into the world. And S. *Hierome* seconds him, saying,

Hieronimus Tom. 9. p. 82 c. 1.

saying, that the day kept in memory of our *Lords Nativity*, is the *day* on which the ancient report is, he *was born*. The next is, *Aurelius Prudentius*, who in his *Cathemerinon* gives us *Carrol*, a *Divine Hymn*, by him pen'd, and made in honor of *Christ*, who was born *that day*. I shall give

Prudentius, Anno 390. Hymnus 8. Cal. Jan. p. 80.

Quid est quod arctum circulum,
Sol jam recurrens deserit,
Christus ne terris nascitur,
Qui lucis auget tramitem?
Heu quam fugacem gratiam
Festina volvebat dies?
Cum pene subductam facem
Sensim recisa extinxerat?
Cælum nitescat, lætius
Gratetur & gaudens humus,
Scandit gradatim denuò
Jubar priores lineas.
Emerge dulcis Pusio,
Quem matris edit Castitas,
Parens & expers Conjugis
Mediator & duplex genus.
Ex ore quamlibet Patris,
Sis ortus & verbo editus,
Tamen paterno in pectore,
Sophia Callebas prius.

How

give you it both in *Latine* and *English*, that it may be like *Moses* his song, *Deut.* 31.28. a record against them that keep not the day, which the *old Father so devoutly merry did* 200 years ago, so much honour, with a piece of *Divine Poesie*, his strains follow.

HOw happens it that now the Sun,
From th'*artik* circle back doth run:
Is *Christs Birth day* now come in sight,
That doth augment the train of light?
How did the hasty day alas!
Before rowl up his flying grace?
How did it piece-meal par'd away,
Almost put out the lamp of day?
The Heaven may glister with more state,
And the glad earth congratulate,
For now again upon this day,
The sun doth climb his former way,
Then shew thy self, Babe sweet in feature,
Thou God and man our Mediatour,
Brought forth by a most chast creature,
Who knew no man, and yet a *mother*.
Although sprung *from thy Fathers mouth*,
And publish'd by the word of truth,
Thou wast that wisdome that did rest
Before *thy Birth* in *Fathers* Breast.

Quæ prompta Cælum condidit,
Cælum diemque, & cætera,
Virtute verbi effecta sunt.
Hæc cuncta nam verbum Deus.
Sed ordinatis sæculis,
Rerumque digesto statu,
Fundator ipse & artifex
Permansit in patris Sinu.
Donec rotata annalium
Transvolverentur millia,
Atque ipse peccantem diu
Dignatus orbem viseret.
Nam cæca vis mortalium,
Venerans inanes nænias,
Vel æra vel saxa algida,
Vel ligna credebat Deum.
Hæc dum sequuntur, perfidi
Prædonis in jus venerant,
Et mancipatam fumido
Vitam barathro immerserant.
Stragem sed istam non tulit:
Christus cadentum gentium,
Impune ne forsan sui
Patris periret fabrica.
Mortale corpus induit,
Ut excitato corpore
Mortis catenam frangeret;
Hominemque portaret patri.

Which ever prompt the heav'n did frame
And all things elſe that we can name,
As Heaven and day, and all abroad,
The *word* made all, that word, was *God*.
And now the world is ordered,
And ſtate of things eſtabliſhed,
The founder yet, and work-man main,
In Fathers boſome did remain.
Till many thouſand years run round,
Courſing o'r them that dwelt on ground
He did voucſafe to viſit them,
The world of daily ſinning men.
For mortals ſuperſtition blind,
Worſhipping vain toyes of mind,
Braſſe, wood, cold ſtones, believ'd to be
The onely God in perſons three.
By this means then did fall all *Lands*,
Into the trayterous robbers hands,
Their enſlav'd ſouls without reaſon,
Plunging in *Hels* ſmoaky priſon.
But *Chriſt* could not endure the fall
And ſlaughter of his *Gentiles* all
Unpuniſhed, leſt in that day,
His *Fathers* fabrick ſhould decay.
A mortall body he did take,
That therein moving he might break
The chain of death, pull out the ſting,
And man unto his *Father* bring.

This

Hic ille Natalis Dies
Quo te creator arduus
Spiravit & limo indidit
Sermoni carnem glutinans.
Sentis ne virgo nobilis
Matura per fastidia,
Pudoris intactum decus
Honore partus crescere?
O quanta rerum gaudia
Alvus pudica continet,
Ex qua novellum Seculum
Procedit & lux aurea.
Vagitus ille Exordium
Vernantis orbis prodidit,
Num tunc renatus sordidum
Mundus veternum depulit.
Sparsisse tellurem reor
Rus omne densis floribus
Ipsasque harenas Syrtium.
Fragrasse nardo & nectare.
Te cuncta nascentem (puer)
Sensere dura, & barbara:
Victusque saxorum rigor.
Obduxit herbam cotibus.
Jam mella de scopulis fluunt
Jam stillat ilex arido
Sudans amomum stipite:
Jam sunt myricis balsama.

This, O Christ, was thy Birth-day,
When the Creator cloath'd with clay,
Thee breath'd by him, and then at last,
The word unto the flesh glu'd fast.
O noble Virgin do'st not see
(Made pregnant by humility)
The Honour of thy chastity
By him enhaunc'd: that's born of ther.
O how great joyes themselves entomb:
Of things below in thy chast womb,
Out of which, *this day* came in sight
A new age and a golden light.
The crying of thy *Babe* began
The *worlds spring*, before the Sun,
For then the world made new *that day*:
Her old foul coat did cast away.
Then I suppose the earth indeed (spread
With flow'rs all thick, the Countrey
And even the Indian quicksands, they
With *Nard* and *Nectar* breath'd that day.
O *Babe* things rude, and barbarous,
All of thy Birth were conscious;
The *stones* their hardnesse did let passe,
And hardest *whetstones* sprouted grasse.
Now *honey* from the rock did still,
The dry stockt *elm* shew'd its good will,
In sweating forth sweet fented *Gum*,
And *shrubs* in dropping pure *Balsom*.

O ſancta præſepis tui,
Æterne Rex, cunabula
Populiſque per ſeculum ſacra
Mutis & ipſis credita.
Adorat hæc brutum pecus:
Indocta turba ſcilicet,
Adorat excors natio,
Vis cujus in paſtu ſita eſt.
Sed cum fideli ſpiritu,
Concurrat ad præſepia
Pagana gens, & quadrupes
Sapiatque quod brutum fuit.
Negat patrum proſapia,
Peroſa præſentem Deum:
Credas venenis ebriam,
Furiiſque lymphatam rapi.
Quid prona per ſcelus ruis?
Agnoſce, ſi quicquam tibi
Mentis recedit integræ,
Ducem tuorum principum.
Hunc quem latebræ, & Obſtetrix
Et virgo fœta, & Cunulæ
Et imbecilla infantia,
Regem dederunt gentibus.
Peccator intueberis
Celſum coruſcis nubibus,
Dejectius ipſe, & irritis
Plangens reatum fletibus.

Eternall King, born in a *Stable*,
Thy *holy Swathbands*, *Manger*, *Cradle*,
Were ſacred held by ages paſt,
Believ'd by dumb men at the laſt,
Theſe things the bruit beaſts & the Bore,
The unlearned rout (I mean) adore,
An heartleſſe Nation, who indeed
Know nothing elſe, but how to feed.
Let *Pagans* with a ſtable ſpri't,
Unto the *Stable* run outright;
Let four footed Beaſts diſcern
What four footed Beaſts concern.
Their Fathers *S*onnes, they this deny,
Hating God, now us ſo nigh. (drunk
Thou wouldſt believe them poyſon
With furies into madneſſe ſunk.
Why doſt thou headlong run to ſin?
If ſome ſound reaſon be within?
Acknowledge Chriſt who is indeed
Of all thy Princes, the chief head.
This *Babe* whom Midwife, cradle, night,
And *Virgin* lighted, brought to light;
And nonage weak, now forth did bring
Unto the *Gentiles* for a *King*.
Sinner, thou ſhalt one day eſpie
In heavens bright clouds exalted high,
Dejected then thou ſhalt in vain
Lament with tears thy guilt amain.

Cum vasta signum buccina
Terris cremandis miserit,
Et scissus axis cardinem
Mundi ruentis solverit.
Insignis ipse & præminens
Meritis rependet congrua:
His, lucis usum perpetis,
Illis Gehennam & Tartarum.
Judæa tunc fulmen Crucis
Exprta qui sit sentiet,
Quem, te furoris præsule,
Mors hausit, & mox reddidit.

Anno 398. The next is *Chrysostome*, who lived at the same time with *Aurelius Prudentius*, about the year 398. of whom the *Christians* of *Tauro Cilicia*, were wont to say, that it was better that the Sun should withdraw his shining, than that *Chrysostome's* mouth should be stopt from speaking. He was first a Priest of *Antioch*, after that Bishop of *Constantinople*, called *Golden mouth*, and not without cause; *Demosthenes Christianorum*, the Christians *Demosthenes*. He in an especiall manner spends his Rhetorick in magnifying the celebration

When as he with loud Trumpets ſound,
Shall give a ſigne to burn the ground,
And the *broke ax tree*: by his fall
Unhinge the *Center* ruine all.
He judge ſupream, then all apart,
Shall give to all men their deſert,
To *Martyrs* light: Hells night for aye,
To ſuch as did deſpiſe his day:
Then to *Judea*, *Judge* ſhall he
(The *Croſſe* a thunder bolt ſhall) be
To thoſe fierce men, who to death
Judg'd him which ſtopt, and gave him breath.

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celebration of this day, in an high ſtrain, as followeth; and firſt, in his Oration *De beato Philogonio*: ſaying,

Appetit jam Feſtum omnium Feſtorum maxime venerandum, adorandumque; *quod ſi quis appellet* omnium Feſtorum Metropolin, *haud quaquam aberret*; *Quid autem hoc eſt? Chriſti juxta carnem* Nativitas; *Ab hoc enim illuſtrato Die, Feſtum Epiphaniorum, ac Sacrum* Paſcha, *Aſcenſio, & Pentecoſte, originem ac fundamentum ducunt. Niſi enim ſecundum carnem natus eſſet, Chriſtus nequaquam baptizatus fuiſſet, nam*

ideo est Festum Theophaniorum, nequaquam fuisset crucifixus, hoc enim est Festum Paschæ, nequaquam missus esset Spiritus Sanctus, hoc enim est festum Pentecostes. Itaque ab hoc, seu fonte quopiam hi diversi amnes orti, nata sunt nobis hæc Festa.

Now that *Feast* is come, the most to be reverenced, and adored of all other *Feasts*; But *what Feast is that? The Birth-day of our Saviour Christ*, according to the flesh, which if any man shall call it the *Metropolitane feast*, he is no way in an errour; for from this day, made so illustrious in its observation, the Feast of the *Epiphany*, *Passeover*, *Ascension*, and *Pentecost*, have their ground and originall, for if he had not been *born* according to the flesh, he had not been *baptised*, which is the Feast of the *Theophanies*, he had not been crucified, which is the *Feast of the Passeover*; he had not sent down the Holy Ghost, which is the *Feast of Pentecost*. Therefore from this, those diverse *Rivulets* do stream, as from their *proper fountain*; and from his *Birth* those *Feasts* have their *Birth* and *breeding*.

Note here, that *Justine Martyr*, one of the most ancient of the Fathers, who flourished

flouriſhed in the year 150. in his ſecond Apology, *ad finem*, and before him *Ignatius*, S. *Johns* Diſciple, who flouriſhed in the 171 year after Chriſt, in his Epiſtle to the *Magneſians*; and *Irenæus*, who was famous about the year 180. writing to *Victor* Biſhop of *Rome*, and *Tertullian*, who writ in the year 203. *Lib. de corona Militis*, do witneſſe, that the Feaſts forementioned by *Chryſoſtome*, were generally obſerved and kept in their dayes, and therefore the Feaſt *of the Nativity*, not mentioned in their writings, not extant, muſt be then kept and obſerved alſo, it being according to the *Father* the foundation of them all.

This I thought good to note by the way, againſt them that build much of their hay and ſtubble, againſt the honour of *his Birth-day* that *was born in the Stable*, upon the ſilence of the *firſt Fathers*. We now proceed with holy *Chryſoſtome*, who further addes in the forecited place.

'Verum, non ob hoc tantum, par eſt, 'hunc diem cæteris anteponi, ſed ob id, 'quod in hoc natum eſt, & cæteris omnibus eſt venerabilius. Nam quod Chri'ſtus homo factus, mortuus eſt, qui nul-

'lum peccatum pertraxisset, quid huic
Chrysost. 'poterit adjungi miraculo? Sed morta-
397. 'le corpus assumpsit, hoc quoque admi-
'randum. Cæterum, quod Deus cum es-
'set voluerit homo fieri, tantumque se
'dimitere sustinuerit, quantum in cogi-
'tatione nè quidem complecti queas,
'hoc est omnium maximè reverendum,
'stuporisque plenum, quod quidem Pau-
'lus admirans dicebat, *magnum esse pie-*
tatis mysterium Deus, declaratus in carne, & a-
'libi, non enim angelis apprehendit De-
'us semen, sed semen Abrahæ apprehen-
'dit, ut poterat fratribus in omnibus as-
'similari.

But not onely for this reason is it thought meet that *Christs Birth day* should be preferred before those of his *Baptisme*, *Ascension* and *Pentecost*; but for that *which was born thereupon*, it ought to be held more venerable than all other; for that Christ made man should die, who had contracted no sin; what can be added to this miracle, *but that he did assume a mortall body*? this is also wonderfull and to be admired. But that being God, he should be made man, and so far debase himself, as cannot enter into

to

to the mind of man to conceive; this is of all the other, the moſt wonderfull and full of amazement, which *Paul* admiring, cryes out, *Great is the myſtery of godlineſſe, God manifeſted in the fleſh*; and again in another place, *He took not upon him the nature of* Angels, *but the ſeed of* Abraham, *that he might be made like to his brethren in all things.* 1 Tim. 3. 1. Heb. 2. 16.

Propter hoc potiſſimum diligo diem hunc, amoque, & amorem ejus in medio propono, ut vos amatorii hujus pharmaci participes reddam; Eoque vos omnes obteſtor, rogoque ut ſummo ſtudio, ſummaque alacritate, velitis adeſſe; ſed priùs ſuam unuſquiſque domum reſpiret, ut videamus Dominum noſtrum, in cunis jacentem. Quid enim excuſabimus, aut quam veniam obtinebimus? Si quem ipſe noſtra cauſa deſcenderit de cœlis, nos ad illum ex ædibus noſtris ire gravemur? Quam aliegenæ Barbariq; ex Perſide accurrunt, ut illum videant in præſepi jacentem, tu vero ne breve quidem ſpacium emitti ſuſtines, ut hoc felici ſpectaculo perfruaris? Nam ſi cum fide acceſſimus, procul dubio videbimus illum in præſepi jacentem; Siquidem Menſa vicem explet præſepis. Chriſtmas day bid holy by St. *Chryſoſtome* It was the uſe of the Church then ſo to do, as ſhall appear.

For this very reaſon, I love *this day* in an

an especiall manner, and propose unto you the love thereof; that I may make you partakers of *this lovelie medicine. Therefore I exhort and beseech you all, that you will be present thereupon, with all endeavour and all alacrity.* But first of all let every one of us purge his own house, that we may see our *Lord Christ* lying in his *swadling cloaths*; For what excuse shall we make, or what plea shall we put in for our absence? if that upon *that day*, when he came down from Heaven for our sakes, we should think much to go out of our own houses to worship him? If when *Strangers* and *Barbarians* did take a far journey out of *Persia*, that they might see him lying in the *Maunger*, we should grudge to go a little way to *Church* to enjoy that blessed sight. For without all doubt, if we come hither by faith, we shall see him Cradled in the *Manger*, because the *Lords Table*, supplies the place of that *Manger* unto us.

Again, *the same Father in his second Tome, and the third Homily, Preached upon the day of our Saviors Nativity*, speaking of the different keeping of the day by Christians in *Armenia*, *Egypt*, and all

the

reſt of the world beſides, they ob-
ving the ſixth of *January*, on the day
the *Epiphany*, when he was *Baptized*,
d theſe the *twenty fifth of December*, thus
ds the controverſie.

Tractemus in corde noſtro, quod
oderno die Chriſtus naſcitur (25 Sci-
eet *Decembris*) Alii putant quod in
piphaniis naſcitur; Non damnemus
liorum opinionem, noſtram ſequimur
oſtrinam; unuſquiſque in ſuo ſenſu
bundet, & forſitan revelabit unicui-
ue Dominus. Et illi qui dicunt tunc
aſci ſalvatorem, & nos qui hodie di-
imus naſci, unum Dominum coli-
us, unm infantulum ſuſcipimus. Sed
ideamus quod magis rationabilius!
Ratio noſtra non reprehendit alios, ſed
os probat. Non ſunt noſtra quæ lo-
uimur, *Majorum ſententia eſt*; Univer-
us mundus, contra hujus provinciæ o-
inionem loquitur; Hic *Apoſtoli fue-
nt*, hic *traditio fuit*; Nos dicimus quia
odie Chriſtus natus eſt, in Epiphaniis,
n Epiphaniis renatus. Mundus ipſe
eſtimonium noſtrum, creatura nobiſ-
um teſtatur, uſq; ad hunc diem creſcunt
enebræ, ab hoc die creſcit Dies, decreſ-

cit

'cit nox; Errorem veritas ſubit, ho
'nobis ſol Juſtitiæ naſcitur.

Let us meditate in our hearts that upon *this day* (to wit *December the tw*
ty fifth) Chriſt was borne: *Others are opinion*, that he was borne upon the of the *Epiphany*; We do not condem other mens opinions, yet we will f low our owne doctrine; *Let every be reſolved in his owne minde*, and may the Lord will alſo reveale this particu to every man. For both they that thi our *Saviour Chriſt* to be borne at t time, and we that maintaine him to borne as this day, do worſhip the ſa *Lord*, and imbrace the ſame *Babe*. let us conſider whoſe ground is ſtrong Our reaſon reprehends not others, juſtifies our ſelves. The words we ſpe are not ours, they are the definitive ſe tence of our anceſtors. The whole wo ſpeaks againſt the opinion of that o Province; The *Apoſtles* are for us, th *Tradition* t kes our part, and we ſay t that *Chriſt* was borne as upon *this* and borne againe upon the *Epipha* The *world* is our *witneſſe*, the *creature* ſtifieth with us, to this day the nig

Being Baptizd in *Jordan* thereupon.

increa

creaſe, from this day they doe de-
eaſe. *Truth* comes in the place of *Er-*
r. This *day the Sun of Righteouſnes roſe*
in us.

Once more, for the *time*, the Father
ds in the foreſaid *Homilie*, that the
nuntiation and *Conception of our Lord*
s upon the eighth of the Calends of
il, and that he was borne in the
oneth of *December*, *in the winter time* *Chryſ.* anno
on the eight of the Calends of *Ja-* 398.
ry, upon the day of the winter
ſtice.

I now laugh to think how the *igno-*
t opponent doth begin to inſult upon
eſe ſeeming contradictions, and calls
e old Father dotard, & is ready to *dance*
g for joy, if he had but a *Scottiſh Bag-*
e; but they that are wiſe know that
betrayes his owne ignorance in *Chro-*
logie, and ſhews himſelfe a *fool*; for
day of the winter *Solſtice*, the twen-
fifth of *December*, and the eighth of
Kalends of *January*, will prove all
e day, if we call but to mind what we
ted before, that in our *Saviours time*
vernal Equinox was upon the 25. of
rch, according to our *Engliſh* and

Julian

Julian account, which was the eig
of the Calends of *April*, accordin
the account of the *Hebrews*, their *Ni*
their first moneth in the year, begin
in the middle of our *March*, and ha
in it fourteene dayes of our *April*,
that the twenty fifth of *March* with u
the eighth of *April*, according to the
and the eighth of *January* with th
the twenty fifth of *December* with us,
the twenty fifth of *December* then (w
Christ was borne) was the day of
winter *Solstice*. As *Valerius Bellune*
in his Compendium on the Sphe
Chrys. anno 398. p. 224. doth witnesse in these wo
Tempore Augusti Octaviani, ut observat
nius, brumæ dies vigesimo quinto Decem
erat, quo die natus est Christus assertor no
In the time of *Augustus Octavian* as *Pliny*
serves, the *shortest day* was on the tw
ty fifth of *December*, on which
Christ our Redeemer was borne.
also the *Julian* and *Roman Kalendars*,
Baronius, Genebrard. Chron. lib. 3. *Gi*
terius, Tab. Chron. Gordon-Lesmor, Ch

Note one thing more, and tha
the great zeale of the Christians in i
dayes, almost 1300. yeares agoe,
th

their ſtrictneſſe in computing and obſerving *the very day of the birth of our Saviour Chriſt*, and keeping it holy, appearing eſpecialy in this, that they would not allow the *Armenians*, or *Ægyptians*, an eleven dayes difference; Yea, ſo hainous a thing it was accounted to keep it on any other day, but the twenty fifth of *December*, that their Doctors, thoſe bright lights of the Primitive Church, both writ and preached againſt it, and the whole world did withſtand it.

So much for *Chryſoſtome*, and too much for any *Scottiſh Piper* to play *No ſyke matter*. Yet we have as pregnant witneſſes as he, among whom is St. *Auguſtine*.

Auguſtine, *that famous Father,*

B ſhop of *Hippo*, in *Affrick*, we may name the chiefe, who flouriſhed in the yeare 420. and hath *four and twenty Sermons in print, Preached upon the very day of Chriſts Birth*; in which he witneſſeth diverſe times, that in his time *this day was ſet aſide by all Chriſtians, throughout the whole world, for ſuch holy exerciſes, as Preaching, Prayer, receiving of the Sacrament, thankſgiving, and rejoycing, and that it was conſecrated, ſet a part, and ſanctified to that end, not by the viſible Sun of this world, but by the inviſible Creator thereof*; *in his nineteenth Sermon*, de tempore, being the *fifteenth* upon *the day*, and more plainely in his twelfth Sermon, *de tempore*, and the eighth upon the day, he ſaith,

Auguſtine, Anno 420 Preaching on Chriſtmas day.

Auguſtine Anno 420

Filius Dei, idemq; filius hominis, ſine Matre de patre natus, creavit omnem Diem. ſine patre de matre natus conſecravit hunc Diem, Divinâ nativitate inviſibilis, humanâ viſibilis, utrâq; mirabilis,

The *Son of God*, and the ſame *the Son of Man, one perſon*, born of the Father without a Mother, created *every day*, borne of his

his Mother without a Father, consecrated *this day*; Invisible in his Birth Divine, visible in his Birth humane, wonderfull in both.

2. *That he was born upon the shortest day of the year*, that *is the day of the winter* Solstice, that was then upon the twenty fifth of *December*, he doth answer in his sixteenth Sermon, *de tempore, and the twelfth upon the day*, giving the reason why he was borne upon this day, *Quo die minor dies nullus in terris*, then which no shorter shines upon Earth, *because* (saith he) *he humbled himselfe into the meanest condition; therefore he chose the meanest and shortest day to be borne upon.* Christ born on the shortest day in the yeare.

3. That that *day that he was borne upon was then* the *first day of the week*, *or our Sunday*: in the night foregoing (the night being before the day, according to the Scriptures computation, *Gen.* 1.) *December* the twenty fifth, he testifieth in his Commentary upon the 132. *Psal*, in his fourth Book, *de Trin. cap.* 5. and in the end of his nineteenth Sermon, *de tempore*, he gives the reason thereof in these words, *Diem in quo creavit lucem, Lux, in quo Crearetur ele.* it, that is to say, *Christ the light*, chose *Augustine*, Anno 420 Chr. born upon *Sunday*.

that day to be created, or borne upon, in which he created the *light* it selfe. And after him, of the same opinion is *Nicephorus*, *Eccl. Hist. l.* 1. *c.* 12. *Dominus Antonius* 1^a. *parte Hist. Tit.* 5. *cap.* 10. *Bonavent. de vita Christi*, *Petrus de Natalibus*, *Lucidus*, and divers others.

Christs Birth-day a Sacrament-day, kept annually.

4. That *the day of Christs Birth was every year kept holy by all Christians in his time*, and that upon *that day* they were bound by speciall duty to receive the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, he doth most vehemently testify, and is line upon line, and precept upon precept, throughout his works to exhort them thereunto, as in his sixth and eighth Sermons, *de Natalitiis Christi*, his 26. *de tempore*, but in his 19. Epistle to *Januarius*, hee is more peremptory, for having spoken of keeping the Feasts of *Easter*, and *Pentecost* before, as if he were angry for forgetting the chief of all, he layes on with an *Hic primum oportet, ut die Nativitatis Domini Sacramentum Celebremus, in memoriam illius qui natus est, & ipsum revolutũ anni Diem festa devotione celebrare.* Ep. 118.

The day bid holy in St. *Augustines* time.

It is our duty *more than upon any day*, to receive *the Sacrament every yeare upon the Lords Birth-day, & to keep that day festivall and*

and holy. And further, in his first Sermon, *de tempore, he bids the day,* and gives the people warning to come to *Church* thereupon, and to prepare themselves in an especiall manner, then to receive *the Sacrament of his Body and Bloud.* The forme of his bidding followes:

Augustine, Anno 420 *Serm.* 2. *in Dom.* 1. *Adventus.*

Appropinquante jam sacratissima solennitate, qua Salvator noster inter homines nasci misericorditer voluit, (Fratres Charissimi) attentius considerate, qualiter oporteat nos, in adventu tantæ potentiæ preparari: ut Regem ac dominum nostrum læti atque gaudentes, cum gloria & laudibus mereamur susscipere, & in conspectu ejus inter felices cœtus Sanctorum, gratulando exultare, magis quam ab eo, propter fœditatem nostram repulsi inter peccatores æternam confessionem mereri.

Et ideo rogo, moneoq; ut quantum possumus cum Dei adjutorio laboremus: ut illo die cum sincera, & pura conscientia, & mundo corde, & casto corpore, ad altare Domini possumus accedere, & corpus & sanguinem ejus non ad judicium, sed ad remedium animæ nostræ mereamur accipere (& Paulò post)

Licèt nos omni temopore bonis operibus ornatos, ac splendidos esse conveniat, præ-

cipue in die Natalis Domini: Sicut in Evangelio docuit, Lucere debent hominibus opera vestra.

Most Dear Brethren, the *most sacred solemnity* now approaching, wherein our *Saviour* mercifully vouchsafed to be borne among us; consider more attentively: how we ought to prepare our selves for the advent of so great a *Power*, that we may bee counted worthy to receive our *Lord* with joy and rejoycing, with glory and praise, and in his sight surmount in giving thanks in the midst of those happy *Assemblies of the Saints*, rather than suffering his repulse for our filthiness, deserve eternall confusion among sinners.

Therefore *I exhort and give warning*, that we labour with Gods help to our ut-
Augustine, most power, upon *that day to come to the*
Anno 420 *Lords Table with a sincere* and pure conscience, a clean heart, and a chast body, that we may be worthy to receive *his body and blood*, not to *condemnation*, but for our owne *soules health*. (And then a little after)

Though at all times we ought to be adorned, and beautified with good works, yet especially upon the *Day of our Lords*

Na-

Nativity, as we are taught in the *Gospel*, Mat. 5.18. ought our lights to shine before men, that they seeing our works may then glorifie our Father in Heaven.

The *Father preacheth on*, and I cannot chuse but take the notes and present them to you, they are so sweet. *Augustine*, 420.

Considerate quæso (*Fratres*) *quando aliquis homo potens vel nobilis*; *Natalem summ. aut filii sui celebrare desiderat*, *quanto studio*, *ante plures Dies quicquid in domo sua sordidum invenerit ordiatur emundari*, *quicquid ineptum*, *& incongruum projici*, *quicquid utile & necessarium præcipit exhiberi. Domus etiam si obscurata fuerit dealbatur*, *Pavimenta scopis mundantur*, *& diversis respersa floribus ornantur*; *Quicquid etiam ad lætitiam*, *& corporis delicias pertinet omni solicitudine providetur. Ut quid ista* (*fratres charissimi*) *nisi ut Dies natalitius cum gaudio celebretur*, *hominis morituri? Si ergo tanta præparas in Natalitio tuo*, *aut filii tui: quanta & qualia præparare debes Suscepturus Natalem Domini tui? Si talia præparas morituro*, *qualia præparare debes æterno?*

Consider my Brethren, I beseech you, that when a *great or noble man doth* desire

to ſolemnize *his own* or *his Sons Birth-day*, with what eagerneſſe he gives his Servants order many dayes before to make cleane what ſhall be found ſoule in his houſe, to caſt out what ſhall be found unfitting, or undecent, to provide what ſhall be profitable or neceſſary. The walls are whited, pavements waſhed, and ſtrewed with fine flowres of diverſe ſorts, and whatſoever belongs to the merry-making of the ſoule, or the delighting of the body, are procured with all care. And to what end is all this great preparation (*my beloved Brethren*) but to grace and glad *the Birth-day of a mortall man?* If then thou prepareſt ſo great and gay things upon thine *owne Birth day, or that of thy Sonne*, how much greater and far more excellent, oughteſt thou to prepare *againſt the Birth-day of thy Lord?* If thou prepareſt ſuch things to honour *him that ſhall die*, what manner of proviſion oughteſt thou to make in honour *of him that lives for ever?*

Auguſtine, Anno 420.

Therefore whatſoever thou wouldſt be ſorry to have found in thine owne houſe in the day of thine owne Nativity, have a care that God may not finde the like

in

in thy ſoule, upon the Birth-day of his onely Sonne.

The Father goes on, *Certe ſi te Rex terrenus, aut quicunq; pater-familias ad Natalitium ſuum invitaret, qualibus veſtimentis ſtudueris ornatus incedere, quam novis, vel nitidis, vel ſplendidis, quorum nec vetuſtas, nec vilitas, nec aliqua fœditas, oculos invitantis offenderet? Tali ergo ſtudio in quantũ prævales, Chriſto auxiliante, contende, ut diverſis virtutum ornamentis anima compoſita, Simplicitatis gemmis, & ſobrietatis floribus adornata, ad ſolennitatem Regis æterni: id eſt, ad Natalem Domini Salvatoris, cum ſecura conſcientia procedat, caſtitate nitida, charitate ſplendida, elemoſynis candida. Chriſtus enim dominus, ſi te ita compoſitum natalitium ſuum celebrare cognoverit: Ipſe per ſe venire, & animam tuam non ſolum viſitare, ſed etiam requieſcere, & perpetuo in illa dignabitur habitare. Sicut 2 Cor. 6. Apoc. 3. 20. Et quam fœlix eſt iſta anima quæ vitam ſuam ita, deo auxiliante, Studuerit gubernare, ut Chriſtum hoſpitem & habitatorem mereatur accipere!* Auguſtine, 420. Auguſtine.

Certainly if an *earthly King*, or any *Houſekeeper*, ſhould invite thee to the *Feaſt*

of his Nativity, thou wouldst care to cloath thy selfe with such new, neat, and gallant attire, of which neither the oldnesse, coursenesse, or foulenesse, might offend the eyes of him that invited thee. Do thou strive then, by the help of *Christ*, as much as possible thou canst, to adorne thy selfe with divers vertuous ornaments, as the Jewels of simplicity, and the Flowers of sobriety, against the *great Solemnity of the Eternall King*, that is to say the *Birth-day of our Lord and Saviour*, that thy soule may draw near with a safe Conscience, purified by chastity, shining through charity, and made white with almes-deeds. For if *Christ thy Lord* doe know that thou being thus fitted, doest sanctifie his *Birth-day* in this composure: hee will come unto thee himselfe, and will not onely vouchsafe to visite thy soule, but to take up his rest and dwell therein; and how happy is the soul of that man, who by Gods assistance, so orders his life, that hee may be counted worthy to have Christ for his guest and inmate: So much shall suffice to have glaunced out of this *holy Father*, for the clearing of this particular.

2 Cor. 6. Rev. 3. 20.

The next is *Orosius*, St. *Augustines* Scholar,

lar, and afterwards a Priest in *Spain*, about the yeare 425. who *writ seven Books of History*, which he dedicated to his foresaid *Master*, in the seventh and second Chapter, affirming the very same things, concerning the *honour*, *time*, and *day of Christs Birth* that his *Master* did before him, that it was on the *twenty fifth* of *December*. *Paulus Orosius*, Anno 425

In the same age flourished *Cassianus*, a Priest of *Massilia* in *France*, Anno 440. who testifieth the very same, and agrees with the former; who further speaking of the *Egyptians*, who did (as hee affirmes) *antiqua traditione*, by ancient tradition, observe the day of the *Epiphany*, in remembrance both of *Christs Birth and Baptisme*, addes, that they did not disapprove the different custome of the *Westerne Christians*, who kept it on the 25. of *December*. *Cassianus* Anno 440

And with him accords *Nicephorus*, *Hist. Eccl. lib.* 1. *c.* 12 saying, *Vigesimus & quintus tum mensis Decembris, erat Dies quum ineffabile pietatis, & amoris, erga genus humanum tuæ (Verbum Dei) maximumq; inerrabilis partus perficitur mysterium.* It was then the 25. of *December*, when

when thou, *O Word of God, the unspeakable mystery of thy goodnesse and love towards mankinde, and the exceeding great Birth was accomplished.* Following *Maximus*, Bishop of *Tours* in *France*, of the same time with *Leo the great*, who hath *six Sermons preached upon the day, extant: And* Chrysologus *who hath one*, Section 172.

Leo the Great, Bishop of *Rome* in that time also, an holy and famous man, that sat at the sterne of that Church for almost one and twenty yeares, hath tenne Sermons preached upon the day; in the first whereof hee proves the point, saying,

Leo Magn. Anno 430

Servator noster hodiè natus est, gaudeamus, neq; fas est locum esse tristitiæ, ubi Natalis est vitæ, quæ consumpto mortalitatis timore, nobis ingerit de promissa æternitate lætitiam. Nullus ab hujus alacritatis participatione secernitor, una cunctis communis lætitiæ est ratio.

Leo Magn. Anno 440

A day of joy.

Our *Saviour was borne this day, let us be glad: It is not lawfull to give place to sadnesse on the Birth-day of life, which taking away the feare of death, prompts unto us the joy of promised Eternity. Let*

no man dare to ſeparate himſelfe from the partaking of this dayes rejoycing, ſeeing there is the ſame univerſall ground of joy to all.

And againe in his ſecond Sermon.

Exulemus, quia nobis illuxit Dies redemptionis noſtræ, reparationis antiquæ, felicitatis æternæ. Reparatur enim nobis ſalutis noſtræ annua revolutione Sacramentum; in initio promiſſum, in fine redditum, ſine fine manſurum.

A Sacrament-day in Leo's time.

Let us rejoyce becauſe *this day of our redemption*, ancient reparation and eternall happineſſe doth ſhine within our doores, for as *this day*, the *Sacrament* or *Seale of our ſalvation* is renewed unto us by the yeares revolution; which was promiſed in the beginning of time, performed in the fulneſſe of time, and continued when time ſhall be no more. So much he ſhewing in his time the ſtrict annuall obſervation of *the day*.

In the ſame age, and at the ſame time did live and flouriſh.

Cyrill of *Alexandria*, Preſident of the Councell of *Epheſus*, againſt *Neſtorius*, Anno 430.

Cyril. Alex. 430 *Theodorat.* 432.

Theodoret of *Ciprus*.

Proſper

Prosper, 445. *Prosper* of *Aquitane*, in the year 445. A
Vigilius, 495. *Vigilius*, who flourished about the yea 495. in whose days the formentioned Fe was kept *universally, constantly, annually.*

Thus have we proved by sufficient wi nesses, whom none will or can deny, b they who believe none but themselves, th point in hand, *for five hundred yeares aft Christ*, for which time the Church of Go continu'd a *Virgin*, without any notabl spot or blemish, and *Apostolicall*; now sh began to be defiled, her beauty to be spot ted, yet she did never so farre fall awa from her first Love, Jesus Christ, in an place where she wandered, as not to fol low the example of those purer times, an forementioned Christians, and every year holily to observe the Feast of our Saviour Nativity. Nay, I believe the thankless ad versary will willingly grant so much, be cause hee would make it like every thing which his Ignorance m stakes, *a piece of po pery*; but what hath beene said already hath prevented that objected fopperie, and the Chu: of *Rome* is to be commended fo the observing of the same, and all men t joyne with them therein.

It shall suffice then, *for every hundred*

year

re following, to bring in *one witneſſe or*
e, till the time of the *Fathers* be fulfilled,
prove the generall continuance of this
ligious obſervance.

In *the ſixth Century* then, we meet with *Rupertus*, the *Apoſtle* of *Bavaria*, famous the yeare 580. who in his third Book, *de divinis officiis*, and *cap* 16. witneſſeth the *nerall obſervation of the day in that age*, d ſaith, that Chriſt was borne *Nocte de-nica*, in the *preceding night*, or about the *wning of the Lords day*. And the reaſon s, ſaith he, *Ut quo dei dixit fiat lux, & ta eſt, lux ejuſdem die, nocte oriretur in ebris lumen erectis corde, & viſitaret nos iens ab alto: illuminare eos qui in tene-is & in umbra mortis ſedebant.*

Rupertus, Anno 480

Chriſt borne a-bout day-break.

That upon what day he ſaid, *Let there light, and there was light*, in the night of t day light ſhould ſpring out of dark- s to the upright in heart, and the *morning uld viſit us from on high, to give light to m that ſate in darkneſſe, and in the ſhadow death*. To this alludes that of S. *John*, en no doubt to *the hour of Chriſts Birth*, *e light ſhined in darkneſſe, and the darkneſs nprehended it not.*

Iſa. 9. 2.

Luke. 1. 9.

John 1. 9

John 1. 5.

In this age alſo, before him flouriſhed

Ful-

Fulgentius 500. *Fulgentius* of *Carthage*, about the beginning of the Century, who hath one Sermon extant in honour of the day.

Isidor. Hisp. 399. *Isidorus* Junior, of *Hispalis* in *Spain*, after him, about the yeare 596. And

Evagrius. 596. *Evagrius Scholasticus*, who writ his *Ecclesiasticall History*, ending in the year 597. And

Greg. Mag. 500. *Gregory* the Great, who lived at the same time, to whose workes I referre you. But especially, take notice, that in this age about the yeare 523. *Justine*, the Emperour of the East, decreed that the *Feast of the holy Nativity of Christ*, should be observed, as *Nicephorus* observes, *Hist. Eccl. l.* 7. *c.* 28. If any one object, that therefore it was not kept before, he may as well argue that *the Lords day was never kept in* England *before this Parliment sate, because they have made a blessed Act for the strict observation of the same.*

Bede, 700. *For the next Century*, from the year 600 to 700. we shall produce *Bede* our own *Countrey-man*, who was *famous in this age*, and hath writ to the purpose in this particular; (I meane venerable *Bede*) and so fully, that he hath delivered in a few words all that hath bin said before, especially concerning

erning *the time when Christ was borne*, to ve you a taſt, which will reliſh well with diſcreet pallate.

He in the 19. cap. *lib.* 1. *De natura rerum*, relating that definitive ſentence of his fore-thers, that Chriſt was *Conceptus Equinoctio verno, natus Solſtitio hyberno*, conceived n the *Vernall Equinox*, and *born in the Winter Solſtice*, hath theſe words: Bede.

De Equinoctiis quod octavo Calendarum Aprilium 1.25. *Martii, & octavo Calendarũ Octobrium* (1) 24. *Septembris, & de Solſtitiis octavo Calendarum Juliarum. id eſt*, 24. *die Junii, & octavo Calendarum Januariarũ, id eſt*, 25. *Decembris, notanda ſint. Multorum latè, & ſapientum Seculi, & Chriſtianorum ſententia claret.*

Concerning the Equinoctials, that they are to be placed on the eight of the Calends of *April*, that is, upon the 25. day of *March*, and upon the eighth of the Calends of *October*, that is, upon the 24. day of *September*; and concerning the Solſtices, that they are to be placed, the one upon the eigth day of the Calends of *July*, that is, upon the 24. day of *June*, and the other upon the eighth day of the Calends of *January*, that is, upon the 25. of *December*, Mark this well.

ber, is the definitive ſentence of diverſe Doctors, both *Heathen* and *Chriſtian*, over the whole world.

He then brings in, firſt the teſtimonies of *Plynie*, and *Hippocrates*, *thoſe Heathens*, then adds, that all the *famouſeſt Fathers of* Bede 700. *the Church are* of the ſame opinion, in affirming, that *Chriſt our Lord was conceived* upon the eighth day of the Calends of *April*, which is the ſame day with the 25. of our *March*, the day of the *Vernall Equinox*, and that upon that very day he alſo ſuffered, and died, and that he was borne upon the day of the *winter Solſtice*, upon the eighth of the Calends of *January*, that is to ſay, upon the twenty fifth day of our *December*.

Bede. As alſo, that *John the Baptiſt*, his *forerunner*, was conceived upon the eighth of the Calends of *October*, which is all one with the twenty fourth of *September*, the day of the *Autumnall Equinoctiall*, and was borne upon the day of the *Somer Solſtice*, being then upon the eighth of the Calends of *July*, according to that times account, which according to ours is the 24. day of *June*, adding this expoſition, that it was meet that the *Author of life Eternall*, ſhould

ſhould both be conceived, and borne in the *increaſe of light temporall:* and that the *Preacher of Repentance*, who ought to be leſſened with the leſſening of the light, ſhould at ſuch a time of diminution both be conceived and borne, according to that ſaying of St. *John* himſelfe, *John* 3. 30. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.*

And again, in his *Homily* upon the *Nativity* of *John the Baptiſt*, he ſaith, that it is not without a great myſtery that *John* was born when the day did decreaſe, and *Chriſt* when the day did increaſe; for *Chriſt* did increaſe, becauſe it was to bee knowne over all the world, that he was *Chriſt*. *John* did, and muſt decreaſe, becauſe he was thought to be *Chriſt*, being onely his *fore-runner*: and by very good right it was, that the *ſhortned day* ſhould gain length when *Chriſt* was born, becauſe God before being onely knowne in *Jury*; now *Chriſt* appeared to be a light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and to ſpread abroad the heat of his love over the whole earth.

And moreover, it is apparent, that though *Bede* in one place doth not ſeem to approve of the ſtrictneſſe of that ſentence, as that our *Saviour Chriſt* ſhould be pre- *Bede*, A°. 700.

ciſely borne on the day of the *Winter ſolſtice*, yet it is manifeſt that he doth not go from it, by his words that follow deſcanting upon the time.

Bede.

Hoc tempore in infimum Cæli punctum Sol devenit, Juſtitiæ vero Sol Chriſtus, *in infimum Orbis locum præſepe deſcendit.* At this time the *Sun of this world* did decline to the loweſt point in the Heavens, and *Chriſt the Son of righteouſneſs* did deſcend into the Manger, the meaneſt and loweſt place on earth.

Hoc tempore reverti incipit ad nos Sol, accipiuntq; dies noſtri incrementum lucis, ac per Chriſti nativitatem Sol juſtitiæ ad nos converſus eſt, lux vero *gratiæ magnis eſt aucta incrementis, ſecundum illud,* John 1. 7,8,9. *Johannes non erat illa lux, lux erat, ſed decreſcens, mixta tenebris, non illa lux, id eſt,* Chriſtus, *lux clara, incrementum recipiens.*

At this time the *Sun* begins to returne to us, and our dayes receive their increaſe of *light.* Upon the *day of Chriſts Nativity, the Sun of righteouſneſſe* came and roſe upon us, and the light of grace received a great increaſe; *John* was not that light, he was a *light* indeed, but a *decreaſing* one,

John 1.6, 7,8,9.

mixt

mixt with darkneſſe; but *Chriſt* was that *light*, that cleare *light*, increaſing unto perfect day.

So much *our venerable Countrey-man*, making it cleare unto us, that the day of the winter *ſolſtice*, and the eighth of the Calends of *January*, and the twenty fifth day of *Decemb.* *were all one and the ſame day*; that our Saviour was borne thereupon, and that it was kept holy in the remembrance thereof, over the whole world by Gods Children in their ſeverall ages; and throughout the dayes that he lived in.

For the next Century, we produced *John Damaſcen*, who flouriſhed about the year 731. and is a witneſſe of the generall obſervation of this day, from 700. to 800. who was equall to *Bede*; and as *Bede* did witneſſe for the *Weſt*, ſo hee for the *Eaſt*. *Johannes Damaſcen*, 361,

For the next Century, extending to the year 900. we ſhall produce

Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of *Fulda*, and afterward Biſhop of *Mentz*, and Preſident of the great Synod there, held under *Lotharius* the Emperour, for convicting of *Godeſcalcus*, Anno 848. He was a man, *Rabanus Maurus*, 830.

Tanta Eruditionis, ut nec similem Italia, nec parem Germania habuerit.

Haymo. 850. *Haymo*, Bishop of *Halberstad*, Kinsman to *Bede*, and Schollar to *Alcuinus* our Countrey-man.

Theophilact An. 880. *Theophilact*, Arch-Bishop of *Bulgaria*, in his Commentaries upon *Luke*, all which did flourish in this Century.

For the next Century, and the next following, till the yeare 1070. wee bring in *Oecumenius* a Greek Father, *famous* in that dark age.

Oecumenius 1070.

Bernard, 1120. Preaching on Christmas-Day *For the next*, mellifluous St. *Bernard*, the last of all *the Fathers*, who though he lived in the time of the *School-men*, whose beginning wee reckon from the yeare 1050. (of whom *Lanfranke*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, was the first) yet hee is reckoned *for the Father*, and gives us a cleare testimony of the due observation *of the day*, in an especiall manner, *for this time, in those many Sermons that hee preached thereupon.* As,

In his first Sermon, *Grandis quidem (dilectissimi) est hodierna dominicæ Nativitatis*

Bernard, 1120. *solennitas, sed Dies brevis cogit abbreviare Sermonem, nec mirum si nos facimus breve verbum, quia hodie deus Pater verbum fecit abbreviatum.*

Great

Great (*my dearly Beloved*) is the ſolemnization of the *day of our Lords Nativity*. But the ſhortneſſe of the day will compell me to make a ſhort Sermon; and no marvail, ſeeing the Father did as this day, ſhorten or abbreviate the *Word*.

Againe in his ſecond Sermon, he *puts the Queſtion*, why *he was borne in the winter, in the night, in ſuch cold weather, in the darke?* Shall (*ſaith he*) we *believe that it was done by chance?*

He anſwers, Other Children do not chuſe the time when they ſhall bee borne, becauſe they have no uſe of reaſon, liberty of choyce, faculty of deliberation; but *Chriſt*, although hee was Man, was in the beginning with the *Father*: He was then God, the ſame in wiſdome and power that he is now, as being the *power and wiſdome of God*: therefore he the *Son of God*, being about to be borne, in whoſe power it was, to chuſe what time he pleaſed, he choſe that which was moſt troubleſome, chiefly for a little *Child*, and *the Son of a poore Mother*, who ſcarce had any clouts to wrap him in, to ſhew that he was not from the Earth, but from Heaven.

Much more might be collected out of

the works of this holy Father, but ſo much may ſuffice.

Thus have we have proved by the teſtimony of ſo many Fathers, men famous in their generations, that for almoſt twelve hundred yeares, the day of Chriſts Birth was kept conſtantly, annually, univerſally, by all Chriſtians over the whole world, religiouſly, holily, and that upon the twenty fifth day of Decemb. according as it hath beene the cuſtome of the Church of *England*, following the ancient and laudable cuſtome of the *Primitive Church.*

Reformed Churches.

The corrupt time of the Church follows, from the forementioned time till the yeare 1517. when the Church began to be reformed in divers Nations, yet ſhee did never in the time of her corruption, ſo far fall away from the love of her *Saviour*, as not to keep the *day of his Birth.*

We come therefore in the next place, to prove, that *all the Proteſtant Churches beyond the Seas*, ever ſince the Reformation, have in their ſeverall *Congregations*, religiouſly kept *the Feaſt of our Saviours Nativity*, according to the uſe of the *Primitive Church*, upon the 25. day of *December*, and have accounted it, and maintained it to

be

be their duty so to doe; and not onely the *Feast of the Nativity*, but *of the Circumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost*, as is manifested at large in the *Harmony of their Confessions*, lately printed in English, to which I refer the English Reader: As also by their severall *Confessions, generall Practise*, and the *Testimonies of of their reverend and learned Divines.*

First for the Confessions.

We shall not urge the words of every one of them in particular, because it would bee too tedious, and because they are the same in substance, and the grounds and reasons of each accord: Two or three therefore of the chief shall suffice. Confessions.

And the first shall bee the *Augustane* Confession, exhibited to the Emperour, *CHARLES* the fifth, in the year 1530. The words whereof in the fourth Article, are as followeth. *Augustana.* A°. 1530. Confessions.

Docemus non damnandas esse traditiones, quæ nihil præcipiunt contra mandata Dei & habent finem politicum, videlicet, quæ ad hoc conditæ sunt, ut ordine res in ecclesia geruntur, Cujusmodi sunt, traditiones de feriis,

Natali, Paſchate, & reliquis, *& hujus generis veteres ritus libenter retinemus in noſtris Eccleſiis.*

We teach (ſay they) that we ought not to condemne thoſe traditions, which appoint nothing contrary to Gods Commandements, and have a civil uſe, or end, to wit, for good order in the *Church:* ſuch are the traditions concerning *Holy-dayes, Chriſts Birth day, Eaſter, and the reſt;* and thoſe ancient cuſtomes we willingly retain in our *Churches.*

The ſecond ſhall be the *Bohemian* Confeſſion, publiſhed in the year 1532. cap. 16.

Bohemica. An. 1532. *Servamus Dominicos feſtos Dies, illoſq; eximiarum Feriarum Dies, qui conſecrati ſunt celebrationi operum Chriſti,* Nativitati, Cruciatibus, Reſurrectioni, *&c.* Itemq; Memoriæ Sanctorum, ut Virginis Mariæ, Apoſtolorum, aliorumq; Sanctorum, &c. *& hæ quidem propter Verbum Dei, & cultus Divini cauſa, propter q; gloriam Dei à nobis fiant.* That is to ſay,

We *keep the Lords Day holy*, and thoſe chiefe Feſtivals which are conſecrated to the Commemoration of Chriſts works, his *Nativity, Paſſion, Reſurrection,* &c. As alſo thoſe which are conſecrated to the

the memory of *Saints*; as of the Virgin *Mary*, the *Apoſtles*, and *other Saints*, eſpecially of thoſe of whom mention is made in holy writ. All theſe things are done of us, by the authority of Gods Word, and in worſhip of God, and for his glory.

Helvetica Poſterior 1566.

The third ſhall b the latter Confeſſion of *Helvetia*, publiſhed in the yeare 1566. which was ſubſcribed by all the Churches of *Sabaudia*, *Poland*, *Hungarie*, and revolted *Scotland*, as *Alſted* doth witneſſe in the 37. chap. of his *Cronologie*, pag. 392. *edit. ult.* 1650.

Scots ſubſcribing to the keeping of Chriſtmas Day.

They in their 24. chap. tell us thus much, *Si Eccleſiæ pro Chriſtiana libertate memoriam* Dominicæ Nativitatis, Circumciſionis, Paſſionis Reſurrectionis, Aſcenſionis in cœlum, & Miſſionis Spiritus Sancti in Diſcipulos *Religioſe celebrent, maximopere approbamus.* That is,

If the Churches, according to their Chriſtian liberty, do, or ſhall religiouſly celebrat the memory of our *Lords Nativity, Circumciſion, Paſſion, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion into Heaven*, and ſending *of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Diſciples*; wee doe in an eſpeciall manner approve of it.

Note here I pray you, to the *Scots* everlaſting

everlasting shame, that all the *Churches* or *Kirks* of *Scotland*, did subscribe this *Confession* of *Helvetia*, and that now at this day they generally speak against the keeping of *Christs Birth-day*. How true then is our Northerne Proverb, *As false as a Scot*? No marvell then, *if they sold their King*, that *thus slight their Faith*, and despise the coming of the *King of Kings*.

Christmas-day a Communion-day in Scotland for 800. yeares.

Nay more, they have herein with *Ephesus* forsaken *their first love*; for if we read the life of *Will: Cowper*, Bish. of *Galloway*, in the 12. p. we may find, that the *Scottish Church* for 800. yeares after *Christ*, did give the Communion upon the 25. day of *Decemb.* by *them* accounted *the day of Christs Nativity*: which is also avouched by Mr. *Ley*, in his *Sunday a Sabbath*. p. 173.

With these forementioned Confessions, agree all the rest, as that of the four Cities, *Argentine*, *Constance*, *Memmimge*, and *Lindavia*, called by some, the Confession of *Sweethland*, published in the yeare 1530. That of *Basil*, 1531. that of *Saxonie*, 1551. that of *Whittemberge*, 1552. that of *France*, 1559. that of *Germany*, 1556.

Adde to these the joynt answer of the Protestants, in the yeare 1541. with the consent

conſent of all the Reformed Churches of *Poland*, the greater and the leſſe; alſo the Churches of *Ruſſia*, *Lituania*, *Samogitia*, in that famous Synod of *Sendimore* in the year 1570. *Denmark*, *Sweden*, and all the *Lutherans*, as appeares by *Luthers* Hymns ſung by them upon *the day*.

Adde laſtly to them all the late Nationall Scottiſh Covenant, wherein the words that are to be vowed, proteſted, and ſworn by them that take it; are,

That they ſhall endeavour the reformation of the Church of England, *in Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Worſhip, according to Gods Word, and Example, and Practice, of the beſt reformed Churches.* Scottiſh Covenant *Art.* 1.

Now *all the beſt reformed Churches keepe the day of Chriſts Birth, as a day of holy worſhip, and thanksgiving, even all of them at this day, and ever ſince their reformation.* Then, I beſeech you note, that whoſoever he be, or whether a *faithleſſe Scots-man*, or a *Scottified Engliſh-man*, that hath taken The not keeping of *Chriſtmas*-

Day is a breach of the Covenant.

taken *that Covenant*, and doth not endeavour, and labour yearly *to keep holy the twenty fifth day of December*, or the *annuall day of Christs Nativity*, is in plain Englisſh, and gu'd Scotch, abſolutely forſworne, for *not worſhipping God and Chriſt thereupon*, in the publick Congregation, as they of the beſt *reformed Churches doe*.

Moderne Divines.

In the next place, we adde the teſtimony of the beſt and moſt *famous Divines* of thoſe *Reformed Churches*, who concerning the keeping of theſe Feſtivals, ſtoutly maintaine, both by Scripture and Reaſon, what their Churches delivered in their *Confeſſions*. I ſhall name onely the chiefe.

Calvinus.

Firſt, Calvin, Inſtit. lib. 4. *cap.* 10. *In verba Auguſtin.* approves the keeping of them, and in his Epiſtle to *Hallerus*, ſorrowes very much that theſe Feſtivall dayes were put downe in diverſe places. And moreover for the day of Chriſts Birth, he ſaith and avoucheth, *Harm. Evangel. in cap ſecundum Lucæ*, that the *day of Chriſts Birth was better knowne than that* it *ſhould now be called* in queſtion; and calls the *Anabaptiſts* that queſtion it, *Aerii Dæmones, Airie Divels*, And accordingly the Church

Notior fuit Chriſti-Nativitas quam ut in quæſtionem vocari debiat.

of

of *Geneva* doth annually celebrate it, as we may read in *Perths* Assembly confuted, *p.* 85. And in *France*, their most notable Preachers give the Communion on that day. Moderne Divines.

Secondly, *Zanchie*, that treasurer of learning and knowledge, *Vol.* 4. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 19. *in quart. præcep. the*ſ*il secunda*, proves at large, that it was kept holy in the purer times, and that it ought to be so kept, and yearly observed by all true Christians at this day, by sound Reasons which you shall read anon.

Thirdly, *Zuinglius*, Rector of the Church of *Zurich*, accounts the *Birth-day of our Lord* among those holy-dayes that he would have observed. *Tom.* 1. *Art.* 25

Fourthly, *Bullinger*, *Decad.* 2. *Serm.* 4. saith, *Quamvis nullibi legatur*, &c. Though it is no where read, that *the Lords day* was enjoyned in the writings of the Apostles; yet because in the fourth Commandement of the first Table the care of Religion, and the diligent exercise of outward worship is commanded, it were contrary to piety, and Christian charity, not to sanctifie *the Lords Day*, especially seeing that outward worship cannot consist, without a *set time*, and an *holy rest*: the same we ought

to

to judge of the holy-*dayes*, or *Feasts of t*
Lord Christ, in which we celebrate t
memory of *his Nativity, Incarnation, C*
cumcision, Passion, Resurrection, Ascens
into *Heaven*, and *sending downe of the h*
Ghost upon his Disciples.

Fifthly, Polanus, professor of Divinity
the Universitie of *Basil*, placeth the *Feast*
Christs Nativity, under the title of *T*
Anniversary Feasts of the New Testamen
which he defines to be *holy times appoint*
among Christians for the worship of God
publike; that is, *To maintaine the conse*
of faith among themselves, for the Preachi
of Gods word, and the use of the Sac
ments, and with one accord to yeild d
worship unto God in the due *Sacrifice*
thanksgiving, Prayers, and Alms. Synt
Theolog. lib. 9. c. 35.

Sixthly, John Gerhard Professor of Di
nity in the *Universitye of Jena*, who h
gathered together many godly senten
out of the ancient Fathers, for the furt
Reasons. rance, and help of our meditations *on*
day of Christs Nativity.

And what should we say more? I
the time would faile us, to tell of *Mela*
ton, in *Responsione Protestantium. Fe*
Homm

Hommius, in the name of all the reformed Churches, *Coll: Antibellar: diſp: 41. theſi*. Of *Bucer* in *Matth. cap. 12. loco de ſe-bis.* Of *Urſin*, *Tract. Theol. in 4. præcep.* Of *Hemmingius lib. hom.* Of *Chytræus in iſpoſit. Epiſtol. Sub initio.* Of our Coun-reyman *Hooker*, *Eccl. pol. l. 5.* Of fa-mous *Andrewes*, in his Sermons; Of lear-ed *Reynolds*, in his Conference with *Hart*, 8. *diviſ. ſecunda*, and many others, fa-mous for piety and learning, who by their *ermons*, *writings*, *Examples*, have juſtified e yearly obſervation of *Chriſts Birth-ay*, upon the 25. of *December*, groun-ng upon the word of God, the *traditions the Apoſtles*, and the *practice of the Pri-itive and Reformed Churches.*

Next *to the Practice of Gods Church, Rea-n comes in as an Armed man*, to confirme e truth, and to maintaine the particular bſervation of the *forementioned day*. The aſons are many, for brevity ſake we ſhall ely for the preſent alledge three, which *anchie*, *that great Treaſurer of Learning*, d Religion, doth prompt unto us in the recited place.

His firſt Reaſon is drawne, A laudabili, cauſe it is praiſe-worthy to obſerve *this* Ratio 1. *day*,

day, grounded upon the chiefe ends f
which *Feasts* were instituted among t
Jewes which are three, as *Thomas Aqu*
nas recites them, 2. *parte Summæ, quæ*
102. *art.* 4.

Reasons. *The first*, That they might remembe
the works of the Lord, and the blessing
that at such times they had received.

The second, To give God thanks fo
them.

The Third, That at such times the
might freely offer large gifts, for the re
leife of the Priests, and poor people.

If therefore (saith he) for the Comme
moration of such benefits and blessings
such times bestowed by God, *Feasts* wer
instituted among the *Jewes*; why the
should any man dare to affirme, that th
Church of Christ may not also institute, an
keep the *Feasts* that we have mentioned
that by observing those *solemne dayes*
those blessings may be kept in mind, whic
we have received from the bounty of *Jesu*
Christ, and the famous works which h
upon those dayes did performe for us, th
certaine Historicall relation whereof w
have in the *Evangelists*.

Therefore, upon such *Festivall days*
seei

seeing they are to be kept holy in remembrance of such benefits receiv'd from *Christ*, and of all that he did and suffered for us, the Histories of those particulars ought to be read, and explained to the people, which the ancient *Primitive Church* was alwaies wont to doe; wherefore (saith he) I doe utterly condemne *those Ministers*, who upon *such dayes* doe strictly prosecute their ordinary Texts, that if upon *Easter day* a Text of *Christs Passion*, doe come in their way, they will explain that, and will by no means chuse any of those that make mention of the *Resurrection*.

His second Reason is drawne, Ab honesto, Ratio 2. We ought to solemnize the *Feast of our Saviours Nativity*, and those other of his *Resurrection*, &c. Because it is a point of honesty so to doe; for if *that be honest* (as *Cicero* defines it) *Which though it bee not actually praised, yet it is praise-worthy*, it Reasons. must needes follow, that it is a point of honesty, to solemnize those *Feasts* which the *ancient Church* graced with a solemnity before us; because it is a point of honesty, and praise-worthy to follow antiquity in things not evil in themselves, but indifferent; for it ought to be our judge-

ment, that the ancients had a sufficient, and a well grounded cause for the doing of such things, especially in the instituting and appointing of such Festivall dayes.

Ratio 3ª. *His third Reason is drawn, Ab utili,* VVee ought (saith hee) to keepe *holy the Birth-day of our Saviour*, and his *other Feasts*, by reason of the great profit that accrewes unto us, and others in the observation of the same: For it is not (saith he) in the tongue of man to express what great profit the common people do gaine by *the due observing of those dayes*, and coming to *Church* to give God thankes thereupon; whereupon the passages of those things that were done by our *Saviour*, for the good and salvation of their soules, are read and explained unto them, and a treasure of good things are begot in them. Let me add, all the *Articles* of the *Creed*, are in a manner every year more and more made known unto them; and they upon every *Festivall built up in their most holy faith*; and that increased by the annuall Exposition, and confirmation, they being taught to believe in *God*, that made Heaven and Earth, by his Sonne, by whom he made the World, Jesus Christ his onely Sonne,

Annuntiation.

our

our Lord, who was *Conceived by the holy Ghost*, upon the *day of the Annuntiation*, upon which day the world was created. March. 25.

To believe that he was *Borne of the Virgin Mary*, upon the *Feast of his Nativity*. Decem. 25.

That he *Suffered under Pontius Pylate, was crucified dead and buried, and descended into Hell, upon the day of his Passion*. Good-Friday.

That the third day *He rose again from the dead*, and that we by vertue of his Resurrection shall rise againe at the last day, and have everlasting life after death, *upon the Feast of his Resurrection*. Easter.

That he *Ascended into Heaven, & sits at the right hand of God, & shall come again to judge both quick and dead upon the Feast of his Ascension*. Holy-Thursday.

That he sent downe the *holy Ghost*, the Comforter, to gather unto him an *Holy Catholick Church*, in which he would establish a *Forgivenesse of sins, and a Communion of Saints, upon the Feast of Pentecost*. Whit-sunday.

Behold the *form of sound words*, which we are to *hold fast*, and the body of that faith without which our soules cannot be saved, delivered upon *those Festivals*; so that by the labour and industry of *Ortho-* 2 Tim. 1. 13. Gal. 4. 19.

doxe and paineſull Miniſters, Chriſt Jeſus may day by day bee formed in the hearts and ſoules of their people, they yearly with
Gal. 4.19. St. *Paul travelling in Birth of them*, may make them ſo *grow in grace, and the*
2 Pet. 3.18 *knowledge of the LORD JESUS*, that they may bring them up at laſt to be *perfect men and women in him. Begetting* them at the *Conception, bringing them forth* new creatures upon the *Nativity, cutting off the fore skin of their hearts* at the *Circumciſion, enlightning their mindes*, and bringing them out of darkneſſe into his marvellous light,
Gal. 5. 24. upon the *Epiphanie*; teaching them to *crucifie their affections and luſts*, on *Good-*
Col. 3.1. *Friday*, and *to riſe to newneſſe of life* on *Eaſter-day*; *to ſet their affections upon things above, where Chriſt ſits at the right hand*
Reaſons. *of God*, upon *Holy Thurſday*, that hee may ſend downe the Holy Ghoſt into their hearts, to leade them into all truth, upon the day of *Pentecoſt*, and into this truth above others, that they *kiſſe the Son of God*, upon the day of his *Nativity*, and ſo they periſh not from the right way, which (*With griefe of heart I write it*) too many have done that have neglected the *Celebration* of this *Bleſſed Day. Alas, alas* how many poor unlearned

unlearned people are there, that cannot read any thing concerning *Chriſt*, or what they are to believe concerning *him*, nor hear any thing of *Chriſt*, but when they come to *Church* upon *ſuch Feſtivall dayes.*

Let mee adde *another Reaſon* alſo, that wee ſhould *keep theſe Dayes holy, and that a grand one*; It is *that we may give no offence to the weaker Brethren*, who if the obſervation of theſe dayes ſhould be laid aſide, and we ſhould contemne and deſpiſe the keeping of them, thoſe poore ignorant ſoules would be verily perſwaded that we did not care for, nor regard thoſe great things that *Chriſt* either did or ſuffered for us, and that we did not count them worth the thanksgiving. Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8. 13

I conclude my Reaſons with the words of St. *Auguſtine*; *Poſt Sacras literas ea nobis ſervanda ſunt, quæ vel ab Apoſtolis per traditionem, vel ab univerſalibus Conciliis definita fuiſſe judicantur*; Talia autem ſunt quæ, toto terrarum orbe, leguntur obſervata fuiſſe, qualia ſunt hæc feſta veteris purioriſq; eccleſiæ, quæ omnia fuerunt de Chriſto, ſcilicet Diei Dominici, Paſchatis, Pentecoſtes, Aſcenſionis, Paſſionis, Cœnæ Domini, & Nativitatis.

Next after the holy Scriptures, we are to observe those Rites and Customes, which came either from the Apostles by Tradition, or are judg'd to be decreed by generall Counsels; such are those Feasts *of the ancient and purer Church, annually observed over the Whole World, all which were kept in the honour of Jesus Christ: to wit, the Lords Day, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, Passion, Supper of the Lord*, and the *Nativity*.

Give mee leave to adde the words of worthy *Zanchy*, concerning the particular Feast of the *Birth-day of our Saviour CHRIST*, and then I shall have almost done.

Zanchie, loc. Citato. Wee know (*saith hee in the forecited place*) that it was a received custome among all Nations *to celebrate the Birth day of every particular Man*, how meane soever, especially of *Princes* and *Great Ones, as of Herod*, of which we reade in the *Gospel*, and that not without reason, for it is an especial blessing that any one created by God, in the womb of his Mother, should be brought alive into this world; therefore as God would have the *Sabbath* to be kept holy, in remembrance of the creation of the world, that thankes might be given to the Creator

Creator for so great a benefit: so it must needs be a piece of great thankfulnes too, & well accepted of Almighty God, *that any man shall keep in memory the day that he was born*, and regard and honour it more than other dayes, in rejoycing thereupon, giving thanks to God, soberly feasting with his Neighbours, and giving more largely to the poor, than at other times.

How much more ought the day of our *Saviour's Birth*, in a more excellent, devout, and rejoycing manner, *annually* to be *observed* and *kept* by all that beare the name of *Christian*, and hope for salvation by that *Blessed Babe, that now came into the world to save sinners*, whereof they must needs be the chiefe that despise the day of so great Salvation; work, and follow *their Callings*, when it should bee their onely *work to remember what the Lord Jesus upon this day did for them, and sing praise to his name.* 1 Tim. 1. 15. Isa. 5. 11.

Methinks what hath beene said already, might perswade any *reasonable Christian to the due observation of the day.* But alas, I finde of late, *Jewes in England, to whom Christ came and they received him not*, John 1. 11. Who unlesse they see *singes*

and *Wonders*, they will not believe; and then neither; ſo ſtupid they are, and obſtinate; *yet whether they will heare, or whether they will forbeare*, whether they will believe or continue in unbelief, and believe no man but themſelves; let them know, *that divers and ſundry Miracles have beene wrought in divers Nations, upon the twenty fifth day of* December, *to confirme it to have beene the very day of our Saviours Birth*; as the *Fountaine* of *Oyle* breaking out in *Rome*, the tongue-tying of the Devils Oracles, the amity of the Beaſts, and many more, which you may finde in *Gregory Turonenſis*, which I may not now repeat; but eſpecially *two* wrought here in *England*, confirming that the *keeping of the day upon the* 25. *of the aforeſaid Moneth, according to the old* Julian *account, is authentick, true, and Orthodox.*

Oak in the new Forreſt.

The one is the *Oake* in the new Forreſt, *Sacra Jovi Quercus, an Oak* conſecrate to the Son of God, left as a laſting witneſſe of this truth, even there, where ſo many *Churches* were demoliſhed; wherein it ſhould have been preached. *Abraham* the Father of the Faithfull, feaſted the *Son of God* in the likeneſſe of *Man*, even *Abraham*

Gen. 18. 8.

that

that rejoyced to ſee his day, and ſaw it, and was glad, under the *Oake of Mamre*, and *this Oake* ſo long after deſires to ſhew unto the faithfull, *the day of his Incarnation, and to ſolemnize the ſame by wearing every yeare upon this very day, new and greene leaves upon it*: as ſhewing to poſterity, *That as this day Truth ſprung out of the earth of* Mary's *Womb, and Righteouſneſſe looked downe from Heaven*; ſignifying alſo, that in his dayes *the righteous ſhould flouriſh, and that hee ſhould grow up as a tender Plant in a dry ground, his fruit ſhould ſhake like* Lebanon, *and bee greene as graſſe upon the earth*; that he is the chiefe of our ſtrength, and that as the *leaves, barke, and fruit of that Tree, are all Medicinall*, ſo ſhould *Chriſt* bee that *Tree of Life*, Revelations 22. 2. *whoſe leaves ſhould heal the Nations.*

Joh. 8. 56.

Pſal. 85. 11

Pſal. 72.

Verſe 16.

The other is that *Thorne* by *Glaſtenbury*, growing, as the *Tradition* goes, on *Joſeph's* Grave. But whether that be true or no, I know not, it may be; this I am certaine, that the *whole Country* cryes it up for a truth, and *a knowne one*, that time out of mind, even to this day, it hath every year bloſſom'd in full meaſure upon the 25. day of

The Thorn by *Glaſtenbury* called *Joſeph's Thorne.*

of our December, near that place where *Joseph of Arimathea*, that buried our *Saviour Christ*, first arrived, and first Preached the Gospell in this *our Island*, to witnesse to all posterity, that our *Saviour Christ did as that day*, bud and blossome out of the earth.

That very *Thorn* in a mysterious manner, pricking deep, and reproving to the quick, the dead unthankfulnes of many men, while that *poore Thorne*, as it were, in way of thankfulnesse to its *Creator*, doth gratefully shoot forth his blossomes upon the *very day of his Birth*, who did honour and grace all *Thornes* so much, as to *weare a Crowne of Thornes* upon the *day of his Death*; and signifying by the white blossomes, that *that King that was* borne *that day*, and wore the *Thorny Crowne* when hee dyed, is now risen againe, and weares a *Crowne of Glory*; and moreover, by the *long-liv'dnes* of the same, intimates to dull mortals, that hee that was *that day* borne, and died on *Good-Friday*, *Crowned in that manner, is still alive, and lives for evermore*. And further yet, that those men that are of such a *thorny* disposition, and touchy froward behaviour, as not to

o ſuffer their ſouls as this day to ſend out he white, & pleaſant bloſſomes of thankſ-giving, for *his Birth*, ſhall at the day of their leath, like thorns that are dead, be caſt into nquenchable fire. Chriſt then coming to leſtroy all ſuch bryars and *thornes*, as the *Souldiers* of the King of *Aſſur*, are called, who came to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, the holy City, Gods Temple, Prieſts, and Ordinances, nd to put an end to the *ſolemn Feaſts*, Iſa. 10. 17. to whom for ſuch an intention he Prophet tells them, *That the light of* Iſrael *ſhould be for a fire, and his holy One for flame, and it ſhould burne and devour all ſuch briars and thornes in one day: And ſhall conſume the glory of his Forreſt, and his fruitfull field, both Soul and Body*, ver. 18.

What ſhall I ſay more? But, that if the things that have beene done in *England*, had been done among the wild and ſavage *Americans*, they had believed in *Chriſt*, and *honoured this day long agoe:* But here is the condemnation, that the marvellous light as this day came into the world, and that this day, was the day of its coming; hath been among us of this Iſland, believed, and yearely is confirmed by *Miracles*, and yet many blinded ones among us, *both*

of

of Clergie and Laity, ſhut their eyes and will not ſee, loving darkneſſe rather than light.

Pardon me (*Or if ye will not, chuſe*) for I am full of godly jealouſie for the honour *of my Saviours Birth-day*, and will affirm, even to my laſt Breath, that it was upon the twenty fifth day of *December*, and is every yeare to bee kept *Holy*, and that ἡμέρα Κυριακὴ that *Dies Dominica*, that L^s.day Κατ'ἐξοχὴν by way of eminence, from which our *Lords day, kept every firſt day of the week*, doth take its denomination, and name, rather than from that of the Reſurrection, & that it was that ἡμέρα Κυριακὴ that *Lords day* mentioned by St. *John*, *Revelat.* 1.10. *upon which hee was in the Spirit, upon which Chriſt Jeſus did appeare unto him in that glorious ſhape*, which is the opinion of divers and good Divines; and the *firſt Primitive Fathers* doe alſo perſwade me to believe it, while they in their VVritings, as *Zanchie* well obſerves, doe affirme, that the *Churches of God* did every where, in their time, yearely and ſolemnely celebrate the *Feaſt of the Lords Day*, beſides the Feaſt of the *Paſsover, Eaſter, and the Reſurrection*, as the chiefe

Rev. 1. 10.

Loco ſuper citato.

iefe Feaſt in the yeare, as a diſtinct Feaſt om the ſame.

This great and principall Feaſt then, of the Lords Day could bee no other (being by hem ſo preciſely diſtinguiſhed from the ay of *Chriſts Reſurrection*) but the *Feaſt f Chriſtmas*, or the day of our *Lords Nativity*, from *which*, and not from *Eaſter ay*, all the *Sundayes* in the yeare, became o be called *Lords dayes*, the truth whereof will appear as clear as the Sun, to any that will take the paines to compare *Ignatius* in his Epiſtle, *ad Magnes*, with *Juſtin Martyr*, *Apol.2. ad finem*, *Euſebius lib.4. cap. 23. Iræneus l. 4. c. 23. ad Victorem Romanum apud Sozomen: Tertullian lib. de idolat. pag. 376. lib. de Corona Militis*, *Auguſt. Tom.2. Ep.119. ad Januar. de civit. dei lib.22. c. 30. de verbis Apoſtoli Ser. 15. Cyrill* in *Johan lib.17. cap. 58. Euſebius lib. 1. cap. 23, 24. Socrates, lib. 5. cap. 22.* And to ſhut up all, take here the words of a *moſt eminent Divine*, whoſe Learning and Piety hath placed him beyond exception, Biſhop *Andrewes* (I meane) in his Sermon upon *John*, Chap. 8. ver.56. There is (*ſaith he*) no day ſo properly Chriſts, as his *Birth-day*, which may appeare, if we ſet

it

it in compariſon with other dayes of mo
honourable note, as the day of his *Paſſi*
on, *Reſurrection*, and *Aſcenſion*: for th
day of his *Paſſion*, that was not ſo pro
perly his, becauſe two Thieves ſuffere
with him at the ſame time, in the ſam
place, after the ſame manner, *Luke*. 23
32. 33. Nor the day of his *Reſurrection*
for as he roſe from the dead, ſo did other
the ſame day, and went into the holy City
Mat. 27. 52. 53. Nor the day of his *A*
cenſion, for *Enoch* and *Elias*, had thei
Aſcenſion too, and long before his, *Ge*
5. 24. 2 *Kings* 2. 11. But his *Birth-Da*
was his without a fellow: None ever *S*
borne, none ever borne *Such*; and there
fore (as no *Feſtivity* is beſides it) it is at
tended as *Chriſt* himſelfe, with an Apoſto
licall retinue of Holy-dayes.

What we have written may be ſufficien
to ſatisfie all gain-ſayers, and to make th
Sun-dimming clouds of all fantaſticall Ob
jections, for to vaniſh, and to bring in th
clear morning of the day; but *Beroaldus*
the Author of the Scripture Almanack, wit
their *fooliſh Hemmings*, and others thei
followers, have told their lies ſo often
that they believe them to be truths, an
th

the *Sun of righteousnesse*, that was borne this Day, hath given them over, that they should believe a lye, because they received not the love of this truth, concerning the *Birth Day* of the Son of God, so that *counting themselves wise, they are become fooles.*

That worthy, learned, laborious, judicious *Gentleman*, *Edward Fisher*, hath lately, sufficiently brayed them and their foolish objections, in a morter; yet I doubt they will never be the wiser. Their objections are *so ridiculous, selfe-confuting, idle, vaine, erroneous*, that I would not defile my paper with them, but that *Solomon* bids me, *Answer a foole in his folly, lest he seem wise in his owne conceit.* Christian Caveat.

These *Jesuites*, *ex ignorantia*, crie out as *Campian* the Jesuite did, *Scripturæ, Patres, Concilia, Rationes*, &c. Scriptures, Fathers, Councells, Reasons, *&c.* All are on our side, they are indeed, but as rods for the backs of fools.

For Scripture, *Christ* (say they) was born when *Augustus* made the whole world to be Taxed, and all went to be Taxed, every one to his owne City, *Luke.* 2. 1. 3. which could not be in the winter, because

becauſe it is not to be believed that wiſe Emperour would command poore men to come in winter to their own Townes:

2. The Shepheards were then in the fields, watching over their flocks, *v.* 8. and the winter was no fitting time for it: A Sheepiſh Argument, fitter for a Shepheards boy, than a Shepheard of *Iſrael*. *Chriſt* (Man) *was not borne in England, but in Judea, and there were Wolves there, and therefore the Shepheards were to watch their flocks at all times; or become like many of our Engliſh, who when the Wolfe comes, flie away.*

But 3. Chriſt (ſay they) according as our affirmation, was borne and baptized about the ſame time, it could not then be in mid-winter, it being not wholeſome for men to goe up then to the head in water.

To kill theſe three Birds with one bolt. The Land of *Canaan* is found to extend it ſelfe for latitude from the 36. degree and 52. minutes, to the 33. and 44. minutes, and for longitude, it is placed betweene 64. degree, and 22. minutes. and the 69. degree and ten minutes, ſo that it is included fully and wholly in the third Climat,

in

in which *Fez* and *Morocco* are scituated, where the winter season (as every Geographer, and Marriner will tell us) is hotter than our *May* here in *England*, and yet *Canaan* in heat exceeds *Fez* and *Morocco*, lying about 40. degrees nearer the East than they doe.

The Scripture saith as much, *Levit.* 23. 5. 6. 10, 11. For in regard that a sheafe of the first fruits of Harvest, was yearely offered on the second day after the Passover, which was the 16. day of *Abib*, and is with us the 27. of *March* (which 27. according to the true account falls upon the 15. of our *March*) it must necessarily follow, that the temperature of the month *December* in the Land of *Canaan*, is answerable to our *May*, if not *June*; the season then of the yeare could no way hinder, either the execution of *Cæsar's* Decree, or the Shepheards being in the Fields, nor our Saviour's going into the River *Jordan*, in *December*. What they urge out of the first of *Luke*, concerning the conception of *John*, that it should be in the beginning of *July*, because the *Course of Abiah*, *Zacharie's Course*, the eighth Course of the Priests fell in the end of *June*, and that *Course* la-

fted a fortnight, is not onely disclaimed by *Beroaldus*, their Patron, who not fitting to be a *Chronologer*, *lib.* 4. *cap.* 2. confesseth, *We doe neither understand when the Course of Zacharias was, nor how long it lasted*; But proves them to be *naturall bruit Beasts* that cannot number; we desire no better Argument than this *Computation* to prove the very day, for let them compute from the third day of the moneth *Adar*, and the sixth year of *Darius*, Ezra 6. 15. When *the Priests were set in their divisions*, and *their courses began*, being in all twenty foure, and every Course continuing one whole week, till the yeare of the world, wherein *John* was conceived, and they shall finde that *Zacharies course* fell in *September*, and then that by their own Argument, *John*'s Conception must bee in that moneth: then in the sixth moneth after *Christs*, *Luke* 1. 26. &c. which is *March*; then let them go to any *Teaming Sister*, and she will assure them, that *Christ* (according to the *Scripture*, and *the common course of Women*) must be born in *December*.

As for their *Fathers* they urge, they will not help them.

Clemens of Alexandria, saith that in his dayes

dayes there was a question about the certainty of Christ Birth: Men in these dayes question both his *God-head*, and *Man-hood*, *Quid ergo?* Is he therefore neither *God* nor *Man?* Strom. l. 1.

But *Cyrill* saith, that the *Church* of *Alexandria*, celebrated at first the *Birth-day* of *John the Baptist*, on the twenty third day of *April*, in his Homilies, or twelve Books on *John*, and therefore Christ must be born in *October*.

Like Father, like Sons, both Bastards, these works of the Father accounted so, both by *Papists*, and *Protestants*, it being certain, that *Jodocus Clictoveus* wrote foure Books of the twelve, and the rest are accounted *Spurious*, both by Mr. *Perkins*, *prapar: ad demonst: problem:* and by *Bellarmin*, *Catalog. Eccl. Scriptorum ad an.* 430. Neither is it likely to bee true, that the *Church of Alexandria* should at the first celebrate the *Birth-day of John the Baptist* in *April*, seeing the *Egyptian Churches* (of which that of *Alexandria* was the chiefe) did ever maintaine that *Christ* was borne on the 25: day of *Decemb.* and yearely kept *that day Festivall* in memory thereof, as *Genebrard* hath shewed out of their owne *Accounts*,

and Kalenders, and not onely they, but the *Greek Churches*, and so did the *Arabian*, *Persian*, *Syriak Churches*, as learned Mr. *Gregory* hath fully proved, in his Notes and Observations, Chap. 34.

But grant, the words of the forged *Cyril* were true, and that they kept *John*'s *Birth-day*, *April* 23. it seemes they fell from the *Observation*, and found themselves in an error, and judged the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches to bee in the right, who kept it *annually and constantly on the twenty fourth of June*, as *Cansabon* confesseth. || *Add.* I would they would leave their Errours likewise.

May be they would, but that *Epiphanius* (say they) saith, that *Christ was borne* the fifth of *January*; take heede, that was in Winter and one of the twelve dayes, I doubt you will turne *smell-Feasts*, but let me tell you, as for *lyars*, *we had rather have their roome than their company*; and you belie your Father, for *Epiphanius*, who (if he were alive, would put you in the Catalogue of *his Heretick*s) doth indeed twice affirm that *Christ* was born in the 33. year of the first *Herod*, the Son of *Antipater*, which was the forty second year of *Augustus Cæsar*

sar, as you may read, *lib.*2. *cont. hæres. hær.* 20. *lib.*3. *hær.* 78. But not a word, either of the moneth, nor day of the moneth.

Will you yeild yet? No: for our *Countrey-man Bede* tells us, that for certain the *Indictions began* on the 24. of *Septemb.* and that our Lord was born (*Indictione quarta ineunte*) when the fourth Indiction began, therefore Christ was borne on the 24. of *Septemb. Help Neighbours!* Born in *Octob.* saith *Cyril*, in *January*, saith *Epiphanius*, and now in *Septemb.* saith *Bede*, and all lies; for *the two former said no such matter*, neither the last, for our Countrey-man doth not say that Christ was borne when the fourth *Indiction* began, but in the fourth, and an *Indiction*, according to *Bucholzerus*, *being the space of* 15. *yeares*, Christ might very well be borne in the beginning of the *Indiction*, though he was born three moneths after the first day thereof. *De ratione tempor: cap.*46.

Well *poor Babes*, your Fathers forsake you, will your Reasons take you up? I doubt they are too weake to heave such *blocks* from the ground; but let's try their strength,

1. *Taxes and Collections of Tribute* began on the twenty fourth day of *Septemb.* as *Ratio* 1.

appeares by the *Indictions* which were instituted to beare account of the payment of Tribute by *Constantine* the Great, *Anno Dom.* 312. Therefore *Augustus* his Decree, that all the World should bee taxed, went out on the 24. of *September*, and so *Christ* was borne on that day. *Hysteron Proteron*, brains and flairs.

Ratio 21. But 2. The Church of *England* doth not celebrate the true day of *Christs Birth*, nor the Churches beyond Sea, because the *Gregorian account* erres almost two dayes, and the *Julian* more than twelve, therefore the Church of *England* erres.

Isay. Chron. c. 8. *No such matter*; for though we doe not celebrate the very day *exactly* and *precisely* taken, yet we celebrate the true day according to the *Julian* account, which account is yet *generally* embraced by the *Protestants*, and not to be despised saith *Calvisius*; well, suppose it be not the very day, I hope you will maintaine that the day of *Christs Resurrection*, or *Easter day*, is *yearely to be kept holy*. I pray you tell me, how often it falls in the same moneth, or on the same day? Suppose the day were not certainly known, *yet the Church hath power to ordaine one annually to bee kept in remembrance of so great*

great mercy, and that of her selfe, by her own power, it being not so much the day, as the benefit, we remember. *Tolle & lege*, 2 Chron. 30. 23. And consider *that free-will seaven dayes Feast, kept after the Passeover.*

Againe, in case we know the day strictly, yet it is not absolutely necessary for us to keeps it on that day alwayes, if the Church appoint, or thinke the contrary; for the *Jewes* did not keep their *Purim* on the same day of the yeare whereon their deliverance was given them, but on the next day after, as you may read in *Esther*; Chap. 9. The *Passeover* was to bee eaten in the first moneth, *Exod.* 12. 2, 3. yet *Hezekiah* and his people kept it in the second moneth, contrary to the institution in that particular, 2 *Chron.* 30. 2, 3. and *yet they were accepted*, as you may read, ver. 20.

Yea, but 3. *I. H.* tells us, in *his Scripture Almanack*, that the *Saturnalia*, those mad Feasts to *Saturne*, the Father of the Gods, were kept at the same time by the *Heathen*, that the *Christians* keep their *Christmas*, and that you have your *Karrils* from *Ceres*, the Goddesse of Corne, in which Feasts at the same time, a sheaf was offered to her; Objection 3

and that you have your word *Yule*, or *Ule*, from ἕλω or ἑλω an *Hymne* then offered in her praise.

Sirs, give over for shame, all these are as false as the *Almanack*, for our word *Yule* is from the Norman word *Nule*, or *Ule*, which signifies new, the sheafe was not offered to *Ceres* in *December*, nor the *Hymne* in her praise, but at her own Feast, which was in *April*, as *Ovid* averrs, *Fastor lib.*4. Nor did the *Saturnalia*, which lasted for three dayes, begin on the 25. of *December*, but on the seventh, as *Macrobius* doth witnesse; but suppose the contrary; May not *Christians* set a day apart to Gods service, in that moneth that *Heathens* made *Feasts* to their *Idols*? If so, wee must bid adieu to all publick services, and serve your humours, and conclude, that the *Jewes* did very ill to keep their *Feast* of Tabernacles, according to Gods command, in the moneth of *Septemb.* seeing the *Heathens* kept their *Bacchanalia*, after the same manner, at the same time. So *Plutarch.*

Saturn. l. 1 c. 10.

Sympos. lib.

But lastly, your Feasting doth offend us: *Your Plum Pottage*, and *Minc'd Pies*, doe offend our taste and smell; your *Bayes* and *Rosemary*, *Hollie* and *Ivie*, *Boxe* and *Privet*,

Privet, with all your green *Strewings*, and trimming your Churches, and Houſes, doe offend our pure eyes, and your *Carrolls* and *Songs* doe offend our ſanctified eares.

Alas *Brethren*, we cannot help it, we muſt not offend God, in ſtriving not to offend you; *it is not We that give, but you that take*; and we may not neglect our duty, to pleaſe your humours.

Wee keep the day Feſtivally, we ought to doe it, as we have ſhewne already, we have warrant for it, *Eſther* 9. 22. from the *Jews* practiſe, who for a leſſe bleſſing kept the 14. and 15. of *Adar* yearely *as the dayes wherein the Jews reſted, and the month which was turned unto them, from ſorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day; that they ſhould make them dayes of feaſting and joy, and of ſending portions one to another, and of gifts to the poore.* And likewiſe from the command of *Nehemiah*, and *Ezra*, in the like caſe; *This day is holy unto the Lord our God, mourne not, nor weepe; goe your way, eat the fat, and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions unto them for whom nothing is prepar'd: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye ſorry, for the joy of the Lord is your ſtrength.* Tell me

Nehem. 8. 9, 10.

me, did ever the Church of *England* celebrate this day, in any other manner than the *Jewes* were commanded to doe those? Did you ever know any *Yule-game* suffered thereupon? Was it not as religiously and devoutly kept, *by hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, offering up the Sacrifice of thanksgiving for Christs coming into the world, and relieving his poor Members*, as ever you did any nicknamed Sabbath-day in the yeare? Nay, I will affirme that you never heard any *Harp* or *Viol* in our *Feasts* upon *that day* (*as the Jewes had*) but our chiefe worke was to remember, as wee ought, the *work of the Lord* thereupon, and the *operation of his hands*, that as this day *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, as the glory of the onely begotten Son of God*, upon the morning of this day, breaking out in darkneſſe, *he making the day his own, by being born thereupon, We will therefore be glad, and rejoice in it.*

Isa. 5. 12.

John 1.

Psal. 118. 24.

Plum-Pottage, & Minc'd Pies.

As for our *Plum-Pottage*, and *Minc'd-Pies*, ſtand off, and doe not let them trouble you, we dare eat, making no queſtion for conſcience ſake, becauſe our ſtomacks are ſtrengthned by that forecited piece of invitation, *Nehem.* 8. 10. *Eat the fat,*

fat, and drinke the ſweete. And *Brethren,* though you will not *put your Spoones into our Platter,* yet give me leave to reach a *Spoonfull of inſtruction to your ſoules,* from our Pie and Pottage, that you would endeavour to joyne with us in the maine of our Feaſting, which is, *to taſt and ſee how ſweet our Lord Jeſus is.* Doe not you cry out *prophane* now, if you doe, St. *Paul* will ſtop your mouth, who makes the ſame uſe of, and raiſeth the like inſtruction from, the *unleavened Bread* that the Jewes uſed in the Paſſeover; 1 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8. *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may bee a new lump, as you are unleavened, for even Chriſt our Paſſeover is crucified for us: Therefore let us keep the Feaſt, not with old leaven, nor the leaven of malice and wickedneſſe, but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth.* Behold two *table doctrines,* one of *Eaſter,* the other of *Chriſtmas,* both raiſed from the Viands.

As for our *Baies* and *Roſemary*, and other green trimmings of our *Churches and Houſes,* truly *Brethren,* we doe, and may doe it, by the ſame warrant that the Iſraelites in the *Feaſt of Tabernacles, Nehem.* 8. 16. did goe out to the Mountaine, and fetch

Baies, and Roſemary.

fetcht *Olive*, *Myrtle*, and *Palme* branches, to adorne their Boothes withall, they are as significant as these; their Boothes so trimmed up with those Branches, and built in the streetes, according to Gods command, signified, and put them in minde, *that they were Pilgrims in the Wilderneſſe, and that their Fathers dwelt in Tabernacles*: So as our *meat* which is more choice than at other times, puts us in mind on that day of *Chriſts ſinleſſe humanity*, and our *ſtrong drinke* of his *ſpirituall conſolation*: So our *Churches* and *Houſes* decked with *Baies* and *Roſomary*, *Hollie* and *Ivie*, and other *Plants*, *which are alwayes green*, *Winter and Summer*, ſignifie, and put us minde of *his Deity*, that the *Childe* that now was borne, *was God* and *Man*, ſhould *ſpring up like a tender Plant*, ſhould alwayes bee *greene and flouriſhing*, *and live for evermore*. Therefore thus the Spouſe entertains her Beloved, whoſe Bed is alwayes *greene*, Cant. 1, 16. and ſhewes *Jeſus Chriſt to bee yeſterday*, *and to day*, *and the ſame for ever*.

As for our *Songs* and *Carrolls*, Brethren, they are *collected and compoſed out of the Scriptures*, *contain matter of inſtruction*, *and edification*, *they implant the hiſtory and bene-*

fits

fits of Christs Birth, in the mindes of poor ignorant people; and oftentimes he is taken by a Song, that will flye a Sermon. Such Songs are like the Songs of *Moses*, which learned by heart, put the people in minde of what God hath done for them, as upon that day, and such are most fitting for the time, and we have an order for them, under St. *Pauls* owne hand, *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdome, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spirituall Songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Brethren,* remember what the *King* said to those men who were bid to the *Marriage of his Son*, and would not come, but went about *their Husbandry*, and other occasions, *Not one of these shall taste of my Supper*, &c. The Day of *Christs Birth*, was the day of the *Marriage of the Son of God*, when the two natures formerly hand-fasted in the Conception, were now declared for ever Married, never to be severed, *that Marriage-day* is annually to be kept by us in remembrance. I *invite you all against the next yeare*, if you will not come, I cannot force you, I leave you to the comming of the *Bridegroome*, and then

then you ſhall know whether you ſhall taſt of his Supper.

Concluſion. I will ſay no more, but that notwithſtanding all your pettiſh oppoſitions, this truth ſhall ſtand ſtedfaſt, That

The 25. day of *Decemb.* ought *annually* to be kept *holy* as a *Feſtivall*, and *Thankſgiving day*, by all Chriſtians; let the Learned *Zanchie* ſpeak the *Epilogue*.

Sic docent Sacræ literæ; Sic Patres: Sic noſtri ſeculi pii doctores: Sic vetus Conſuetudo, atq; Uſus in omnibus, & omnium locorum, & Gentium eccleſiis receptus, & approbatus confirmat (Addo) Sic denicq; Miracula.

So much the *Scriptures* teach, ſo much the *Fathers*, ſo much the *holy Doctours* of our dayes; In a word, *The ancient uſe and cuſtome*, received and approved in all the *particular Churches of all places and Nations*, doe approve and maintain ſo much as hath beene ſpoken, and (let me adde) ſo much the forementioned *Miracles*.

Now he that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill; he that is ignorant, let him be ignorant ſtill:

But

But he that is holy, let him be holy still.
Behold he comes quickly, and his reward is with him, to give every man according to his work, to both them that doe, and doe not.

Opus Dei in Die suo.

Till then, grace and peace bee to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and the day of his appearing.

Amen, HALLELUJAH.